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DAILY CIRCULATION, . . . 4,000

"All the world's a stage,  
And all the men and women merely players."

SATURDAY, APRIL 15th, 1865.

## AMUSEMENTS.

GILBERT'S MUSEUM.—This ever attractive place for young and old, Gilbert's museum, will have its doors thrown open as usual to the public to-day. The Chinese Jugglers and Learned Pig are still among the attractions.

THE ANATOMICAL MUSEUM is one of the great attractions of the day, where a lesson of vital interest will be obtained by all who visit and see for themselves the many forms of "The house we live in."

THE WILLOWS.—There will be sport of all kinds at the Willows Sunday, such as Shuffle Boards, Ten Pin Alleys, Shooting Galleries, together with Flying horses, Revolving Carriages, Swings, etc., for the amusement of the little folks.

HAYES PARK will be open Sunday, for dancing and other amusements.

LATEST DISPATCHES.

## ASSASSINATION

OF



## ABRAHAM LINCOLN

[FIRST DESPATCH.]

Washington April 15.

Gen. H. W. Carpenter: His Excellency President Lincoln was assassinated at the theatre last night.

[SECOND DESPATCH.]

President Lincoln died at 8:30 this morning, and Secretary Seward a few minutes past 9.

[THIRD DESPATCH.]

Reports of are contradictory. It is reported that President Lincoln died at 7:29.

NING EDITION.

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ICLE OFFICE - - 34 P M.

## ATH OF THE RESIDENT.

## DEROUS ATTACK I MR. SEWARD.

Booth Supposed to be  
the Murderer of the  
President.

INGTON, April 14th.—President and wife, with other friends, having visited Ford's Theatre for the purpose of witnessing the performance of the "American Cousin." It was said in the papers that General Grant would also be present, but that he took a late train of cars for New Haven. The theatre was densely crowded, and everybody seemed delighted at the scene before them.

During the third act, and while there was a temporary pause for one of the actors to enter, a sharp report of a pistol was heard, which merely attracted attention but suggested nothing serious. A man rushed in front of the President, waving a long dagger in his hand, exclaiming, "sic semper tyranus," and immediately leaped from the box in the second tier to the ground, ran across to the opposite



St. Francis Hotel, corner of Dupont and Clay streets.

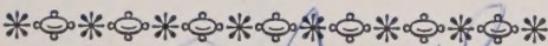


TREMENDOUS EXCITEMENT !

Samuel Whittaker and Robert Mc Kenzie rescued from the authorities



To Bill  
Jean & Bill  
With love



GAUDY CENTURY

1948

Nov. 17,



# Gaudy Century

The Story  
of San Francisco's  
Hundred Years of  
Robust Journalism

*By JOHN BRUCE*

*With an Introduction by*  
**JOSEPH HENRY JACKSON**

RANDOM HOUSE : New York

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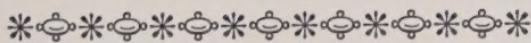
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Designed by Meyer Wagman



To Hazel, with love

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## *Acknowledgments*

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THE background material for this book rests mostly in the old newspapers themselves, silent witnesses of the past history of San Francisco. From their fading pages have come the facts that are the foundation of *Gaudy Century*; from the mouths of some of those who edited those old pages (most of them also now silent) have come many stories perhaps unrecorded until now. The research has been aided by many, but I am particularly indebted to Frank Brezee of the Bancroft Library, University of California at Berkeley; Helen Putnam Van Sicklen, formerly of the Society of California Pioneers at San Francisco; Evelyn Wells Podesta, author of numerous books including *Fremont Older*; Mrs. Marjorie Brown, librarian of the *San Francisco Chronicle*; Mrs. Cora Older, Marshall Maslin, John Stump of Mechanics' Institute, Joseph Henry Jackson and Robert O'Brien of San Francisco—all good companions in the happy prowl for folklore of a San Francisco much beloved by all of us.

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## *Introduction*

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To reflect a city in terms of its newspapers you need to do something else. You must also reflect the newspapers in terms of the city.

This is not intended as an easy epigram but rather as a plain statement of fact. John Bruce must have discovered this truth almost as soon as he began digging through the files, and in his memory, for the stuff of which *Gaudy Century* is made. For the book does both these things. It is a personally conducted tour through one hundred years of San Francisco's past and present, and at the same time a mirror of the city's press—the dozens upon dozens of newspapers and periodicals through which San Francisco's bustling vitality, and sometimes its harshness and violence, have been funneled to the citizens during the hundred years of the city's existence. It is not so easy, therefore, to say whether this is a book about a city or a book about newspapering. It is easy enough, however, to perceive that it doesn't make the least difference which you call it. It is a book in which you may come to know a lot about San Francisco, its birth, its growing-pains, its development to maturity as a city worthy to be called "great." It is also a book in which you may learn something of how a big city's newspapers came into being, how some of them languished and died and others thrived on the nourishing news of the century Mr. Bruce aptly calls "gaudy." That these things make good reading should go without saying.

San Francisco, as a matter of fact, had a newspaper before it was San Francisco. Sam Brannan, recalcitrant Mormon elder, had been publishing his *Star* in the tiny village of Yerba Buena for almost a year when the people there decided that their town should be named for a saint, and translated their decision into law. But Brannan, recalcitrant in other matters than his Mormonism, set the pattern that the city and its press have followed since. He wouldn't be rushed.

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When he got around to it, he'd come to his own conclusions. So it was that San Francisco's first newspaper calmly waited for three months before its owner concluded that maybe the new name would stick after all and, for the first time, dated the lead story, "San Francisco, California."

That was in 1847. A year later there was some silly story going the rounds about a carpenter named Marshall who had picked up some gold from a millrace in the Sierra foothills, a hundred and fifty miles to the east. Edward Kemble, new editor of the *Star*, was quite as obstinate as his proprietor. He said flatly that the whole affair was a sham, a "take-in, got up to guzzle the gullible." It was not long before he had to take it back. In May, 1848, the rival *Californian* announced its suspension, and *The Star* followed suit. If anyone had been gullible it had been Editor Kemble. The gold discovery was no sham, no take-in. All California and, it soon seemed, half the rest of the world were headed pell-mell for the greatest El Dorado yet.

What the gold rush did to San Francisco is the beginning of Mr. Bruce's story here. With millions in gold pouring down from the hills, San Francisco grew to city size almost overnight. And with this growth the city's press came suddenly into lavish being. In the first decade of San Francisco's history, 132 periodicals of one kind or another had been started. At one time, owners, editors and reporters —this did not include the mechanical staff or the circulation and advertising departments—numbered more than a thousand. It would be difficult to name any special interest which was not represented, from Temperance to Tatting. There were papers for mining men, for the children, for the many foreign-language groups that swelled the population. Gossip sheets flourished. Long before today's "keyhole column" was born, professional peepers in San Francisco newspapers, under such by-lines as "Paul Pry" and "Night Owl," were printing items like this: "What WOMAN, residing on Green Street, visits the Assignation House on Broadway near Powell? Does her HUSBAND know she's out?" Nor were the properly genteel ladies forgotten. It was in a San Francisco periodical, *The Hesperian*, carefully committed to uplifting thoughts of the kind that good women were expected to appreciate, that this incredible quatrain saw print:

"Oh happy is the loving father's heart,  
For though his soul be proud, his physique burly,

*His eyes grow moist with gladness when he hears  
Those young lips utter, ‘Papa, tum home early!’”*

The press of San Francisco was not entirely given over to prying and poesy, of course. As the decades rolled along, the young and lusty city made news as fast as the papers could print it. There was violence—some of it private, some of it public as when the Committees of Vigilance tolled the great bell and men with secret, numbered gold slugs in their pockets came running, armed, to answer the summons. There was no end to politics, and some of the politics was sufficiently scandalous to make it news of the first order. There were duels and there was a man named Henry George who had curious ideas, and there was a never-ending parade of notable writers, from Bret Harte, Mark Twain, Charles Warren Stoddard and Prentice Mulford on down through Joaquin Miller, Jack London, Will and Wallace Irwin, Gelett Burgess, Gertrude Atherton and a hundred more. There was—but this is what Mr. Bruce has to tell you, and his text does the job handsomely.

As for the author, it would be difficult to find a man better informed on the subject he tackles here.

John Bruce came to San Francisco at the age of two, just as the new Twentieth Century arrived. He grew up in the Mission District, where the tough kids played baseball for keeps, and the team that lost the game thought nothing of sending home their rival's first baseman with a black eye and a torn pants-leg. Perhaps this kind of boyhood was what made young Bruce a successful carrier on his newspaper route, up in the hilly section where the kids and the competition were hardest. Those were the days when the graft trials were on and San Francisco's municipal administration was being torn to bits in the courts, and Bruce was often able to sell his leftovers for as high as a quarter each. The extra money usually went through the wicket at the Wigwam Theater's box office where the boy got his first inkling of the great world by way of the ten-twenty-thirty melodramas in which the Wigwam specialized.

It may have been his early connection with newspapers as a carrier or it may have been pure obstinacy; today, Bruce doesn't quite know. But when he finished at the University of California, across the Bay in Berkeley (and had found out in World War I that second lieutenants in the Field Artillery were expendable and that he had

just been lucky), he was set in his conviction that the only life was that of the newspaperman.

He worked at the usual small jobs and then got his real chance, covering all the really big murder cases for Hearst in the middle and late 1920's. On the side he wrote voluminously for the old *Adventure* and *Short Stories*, under a reversed form of his name as "Bruce Johns." Then, when the noted editor, Fremont Older, decided that he had been all wrong about the Mooney case and dedicated himself to getting Mooney out of prison, it was Bruce he picked to do the detailed spade-work of sifting and summarizing the old evidence and digging out the clues on which Older built his plea. Eight years on that job earned him Older's warm personal friendship and the assignment to write a regular column on San Francisco, its history and its contemporary affairs.

Writing his column acquainted Bruce with the past of the city whose present he knew at first-hand. And when Fremont Older died, and Bruce came over to *The Chronicle* where he has been City Editor for the last ten years, he was not only a newspaperman but a writer thoroughly at home in the lore of the city in which he lived. That *Gaudy Century* should be the result of all this is merely the simplest sort of step in the elementary logic of Bruce's career to date.

By this time, the reader must be aware that *Gaudy Century* is a lively and highly entertaining narrative of life and the press in a city Frank Norris described (he was the first, though many others have said it since) as one of the three great "story cities" of America. In it you'll find comedy, tragedy, high politics and low, love and hate and sudden death, big business and big men (and little ones), all the vital stuff of which any city, but particularly San Francisco, is made. You'll find all this selected and put together by a working newspaperman whose career has been bound up with his city for more than a quarter of a century, and in whose affections San Francisco has occupied first place for all those years. You'll find also—but after all, Mr. Bruce's text is the place to make the discovery. I commend the book to you with the final note that when you have finished Mr. Bruce's story you will be happy that you have improved your acquaintance with one of America's cities worth knowing.

San Francisco, California  
September, 1948

Joseph Henry Jackson.



## Preface

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“WE PASS every afternoon about 4½ to 5 o'clock along Market street from Fourth to Fifth street. The road is wide and not so much frequented as those streets farther in town. If we are to be shot or cut to pieces, for Heaven's sake let it be done there. Others will not be injured, and in case we fall our house is but a few hundred yards beyond and the cemetery not much farther.”—Editor James King of William, answering his dueling mail in his *San Francisco Bulletin*, December 6, 1855.

Old San Francisco still clings around the site of the narrow little brick building in which this note was written. The nearby Hall of Justice stands on the ground originally occupied by a fancy gambling house. Down the street are buildings whose foundations were strengthened by timbers from ships abandoned by gold-seeking crews. They have been shored up now and exteriors refurbished like

old boots given new heels and a polish. Here was the pioneer newspaper row where robust editors started a turbulent history of Western journalism.

At this point Montgomery Street, where the old buildings stand, is slow and important, as befits an elder dignitary who begot a great city. Yet but a few blocks away are the skyscrapers arising in a great heap. It is almost as if an attempt had been made by men to add a hill to the seven on which the city rightfully, and naturally, rests.

From all these skyscrapers stenographers and clerks by the thousands step promptly at nightfall and turn enthusiastically toward uptown transportation. From the old buildings a conglomeration of artists wander reluctantly when the north light fades. And just up the alley, blue lights come on about this time at the morgue entrance where a noted writer once committed suicide to lessen the labors of the ambulance men.

The district, therefore, is often quiet at evening and if fog moves down, as it often does on the late west wind, the small area where these editors made newspaper history sometimes seems little changed after some ninety years. In this old memory-laden newspaper row the engaging talents of Mark Twain, Bret Harte, Ambrose Bierce, Joaquin Miller, Arthur McEwen, Fremont Older and hundreds of others once sparkled.

Across from the Hall of Justice, Robert Louis Stevenson, sick and discouraged, dreamed away his afternoons in a plaza that would later have his first monument. Rudyard Kipling, a bad reporter, in later years twirled through the district snagging on his careless pen events and scenes that were never there. And Horace Greeley didn't honestly like this part of the West to which he so earnestly urged the young man to go.

But hundreds of others loved it dearly, for in this city they first accepted applause as they spread gifted wings. The list of stage folk, cartoonists, writers, who in their fashions have been faithful, starts with Lola Montez and Lotta Crabtree and Edwin Booth and goes to Belasco, Warfield, Olcott, Blinn, Nance O'Neill, Eltinge, Marjorie Rambeau, Pauline Lord, Harrison Fisher, Homer Davenport, Bud Fisher, Tad, Hype Igoe, Herriman, Swinnerton, Rube Goldberg, and on and on and on.



The dynasty of Hearst began here with the gift of a newspaper and several million dollars.

The claim is made that more nationally recognized talent was developed by the San Francisco editor Fremont Older than by any other in journalism's history.

The city is still young—not much more than 100 years—but from sand dunes to skyscrapers it has molded a gaudy history yeasty with tumultuous events. Seven times it has earned the Phoenix in its seal by arising from the ashes of total fires. Once it was badly wounded by a great catastrophe of flames above and quaking earth beneath. It has been wicked at times, contradictory often, and gay and boastful always.

To know San Francisco a little and its newspapers a great deal you must hear about it from the beginning.

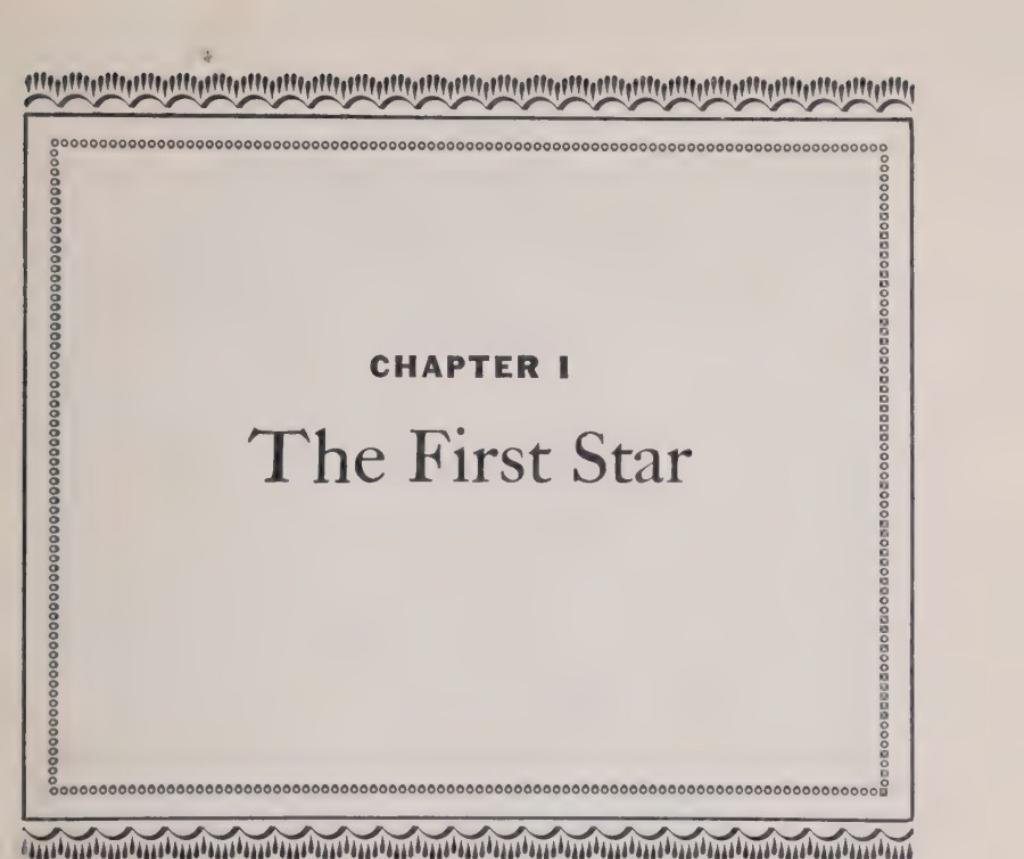




## GAUDY CENTURY

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## CHAPTER I

# The First Star

WHEN, in 1769, Catholic missionaries from Mexico came seeking converts among the mild Coastal Indians, the future site of San Francisco was in itself hardly worth coveting. It was a small cove surrounded by sand dunes that only stopped shifting when the summer winds died or enough roots of the yerba buena bush got attached to them. There had been, shortly before, a band of Spanish soldiers in a presidio at the south shore of the Golden Gate.

The missionaries went about their business for half a century before a community began to appear on the shore of the tiny cove. It had one shack at first, then two—and, almost ten years later, a dozen. Mexico had meanwhile left Mother Spain and claimed the territory, but a revolt that started in 1846 eventually placed all of California in the United States. Now Alcalde Washington Bartlett, believing

the name of Yerba Buena (from the "good herb") not dignified enough for a city, changed it officially to San Francisco.

The principal feature attraction of the parade of progress was the usual saloon and printshop. Sam Brannan, a Mormon leader, had brought a small hand press on a ship from New York and with it he started, on January 9, 1847, the *California Star*. It wasn't much of a newspaper field—still little more than 300 people of all ages in the territory. The *Star* was four pages, thirteen by eighteen inches of three columns each, issued every Saturday. The first edition came off a press in a grist mill.

It was not, however, the first newspaper in California. In the summer of 1846, the frigate *Congress* put into Monterey after a long voyage. Chaplain Walter Colton was tired of preaching to a crew whose primal feelings had little to do with the Lord. He decided, with as much reason as most, that he wanted to write. About this time he met Robert Semple.

Semple had the leavening toughness that a minister might need in a newspaper partnership. He was from Kentucky, six-foot-four, hard and serious, hollow-cheeked. He was in buckskin dress and wore a foxskin cap.

The Reverend Colton's description of Semple added the superlative praise for a frontier newspaperman: "True with the rifle, ready with his pen and quick at the type case."

They took to each other at once, the man of the Bible and the man of the wilds. Each wanted to express himself—and there they were with ambitions and no press. One day they met a Mexican padre.

"There is a heap of things piled in one of the outhouses of the church," said the Padre. "Among them, I believe, is the press upon which our Governor was issuing his proclamations before the Americans came."

They dug into the dirt-clogged room and found an old Ramage press that had been built a great many years before in Boston. It was a counterpart of Benjamin Franklin's and probably just as old. The press frame, its platen, ribs and part of the bed were of wood. The pressure screw was of iron and strong enough to raise a building.

Colton left a good account of it:

"It was old enough to be preserved as a curiosity. The mice had burrowed in the balls; there were no rules, no leads; and the type was rusty and all in pi. It was only by scouring that the letters could be made to show their faces. A sheet or two of tin were procured, and these with a jack-knife were cut into rules and leads. Luckily we found with the press the greater part of a keg of ink. . . ."

Newsprint was still lacking, but any newspapermen who have a press are going to have a newspaper. The natives were heavy smokers of cigarettes, rolling their own into the irregular shape of badly made cigars. And so the first newspaper in California—the *Californian*—appeared in Monterey, August 15, 1846, printed on large sheets of cigarette paper.

Its typography was explained in Colton's preliminary brochure:

"OUR ALPHABET:—Our type is a Spanish font picked up here in a cloister and has no VV's in it, as there are none in the Spanish alphabet. I have sent to the Sandvich Island for this letter; in the meantime vve must use tvvo V's. Our paper at present is that for vvrapping segars; in due time vve vvill have something better.

VValter Colton."

The *Californian* came out regularly each week, half in English, half in Spanish, until May of 1847 when Semple took it to San Francisco and sold it, press and all, to B. R. Buckelew, a jeweler. Colton took his Bible and went east.

Now that two newspapers had met in San Francisco and found only 375 people in town, eighty-nine of whom, a survey showed, couldn't read, the battle at once opened for circulation supremacy. Editor E. P. Jones of the *California Star* (Brannan was still owner) told his readers his was "the only independent paper and the only paper of respectable size in the whole of the Pacific Coast from the boundary of Mexico to the frozen regions of the north." He began selling his weekly for a *real* per copy, which was a Mexican coin worth about twelve and one-half cents, or one-bit. (A twenty-five-cent piece is still known in San Francisco as two-bits.)

Buckelew began charging \$5 a year or about nine and one-half cents per copy, and said after all his was the *first* newspaper in Cali-

fornia. Editor Jones proudly divulged his circulation as exactly 100. Bucklew was silent on this issue.

The next year, 1848, the *Star* startled its readers and some parts of the nation with an innovation—a Progress Edition. It already had a new editor, Edward Kemble, a young New York printer. Editor Kemble printed 2,000 copies and sent them overland by mule train express to the East. He was starting something that editors would use for many years to come when the till needed jingling.

Reporting was rumor-chasing and rumor was news. An editor-publisher-printer-circulator-manager could not find time to do more. Excitatory writing was the vogue. Already wagon trains were headed for California, although discovery of gold had not been announced, and immigrants were bogging down in the Sierra snows. The *Star's* eager editor accepted this historical falsehood from a correspondent:

"The bones of those who had died and been devoured by the miserable ones that still survived, were lying around their tents and cabins. A woman sat by the side of the body of her husband, who had just died, cutting out his tongue; the heart she had already taken out, broiled and eaten. One immigrant took a child of four and ate the whole before morning."

But the rival editors, so busy taking everything for granted, missed the greatest story of many decades—in fact, possibly the biggest news break of the century—the discovery of gold. Parties had noisily left San Francisco for the diggings for a month before either paper awakened to it. (Journalistically, this is often referred to as the Golden Silence of the Press.)

James W. Marshall, as all the world knows now, picked up what he termed a *chispa* shaped like a melon seed in a mill race at Coloma, bit it and found it malleable on January 24, 1848. Coloma is less than 150 miles from San Francisco.

Marshall, improvident and one for the bottle, didn't do much about his discovery except tell his boss, Captain John Sutter. (The discoverer of gold died broke in 1885.) But there were others on the scene and word got about and shortly bands of miners were rushing for El Dorado country.

The news about gold did not break in any newspaper until March

15th, almost two months after the discovery. Then Editor Bucklew of the *Californian* placed the story on Page Two, bottom of column three, with a simple, half-column run-in head:

"GOLD MINE FOUND—In the newly made raceway of the Saw Mill recently erected by Captain Sutter, on the American Fork, gold has been found in considerable quantities. One person brought thirty dollars worth to New Helvetia, gathered there in a short time. California, no doubt, is rich in mineral wealth, great chances here for scientific capitalists. Gold has been found in almost every part of the country."

A paragraph about a private horse race three miles out of town topped the big news that the pioneer editor made so small.

The *Star* took ten days to catch up to the unrecognized scoop of the *Californian*. And then it was a few idle lines.

The *Californian*, after admitting that there was gold around, went into official silence again, although it permitted a letter-writer to express a definite point of view:

"I doubt, sir, if ever the sun shone upon such a farce as is now being enacted in California, though I fear it may prove a tragedy before the curtain drops. I consider it your duty, Mr. Editor, as a conservator of the public morals and welfare, to raise your voice against the thing. It is to be hoped that General Mason will dispatch the volunteers to the scene of the action, and send these unfortunate people to their homes, and prevent others from going hither."

Properly covered or not, the Gold Rush was on. An April 1, 1848, issue of the *Star* finally reached the East, to be picked up in the August 19th edition of the *New York Herald*. It told the world for the first time that big things were happening in the Far West.

By October, 1848, the first gold steamer went out of New York harbor. The big push was on toward the West.

Several months before the East knew about it, Editor Kemble of the *Star*, pulling himself reluctantly from his desk, had made a trip to the Mother Lode. He came back, almost at once, to pronounce the mines "all a sham, as superb a take-in as ever was got up to guzzle the gullible."

No one listened to the gullible editors. Rumor was on the wing, and it was good. Every day reports of great finds grew. Small parties organized and disappeared from the city. Gold was brought back. It came in river nugget and dust. An exhibit was placed in a store window. Seein' was believin' to all but the editors.

Suddenly the fever boiled the city's blood. Workmen dropped tools and hurried away; shopkeepers walked out leaving goods on the shelves. "As if by a plague, the town was depopulated," the *Star* had to admit. There was not an able-bodied man to be seen in the muddy streets of little San Francisco, unless it was an editor. Homes stood vacant; ships idle in the bay for want of crews.

The editors had it brought home in the way many newspapermen have had to learn the facts—the silence of the till in the front office. There were no subscribers and, more disastrous, no advertisers.

In May of 1848, the *Californian* published a fly-sheet saying it was suspending. Editor Buckelew made a plaintive exit:

"The whole country, from San Francisco to Los Angeles, and from the seashore to the base of Sierra Nevada, resounds with the sordid cry of gold! Gold!! GOLD!!! while the field is left unplanted, the house half builded, and everything neglected but the manufacturers of shovels and picks."

Then Buckelew took one last flier before he crashed. Still wearing his printer's apron, he cranked the press to get out a small slip of printed matter, in which he announced:

"For the purpose of convincing what there is left of the public that the *Californian* is NOT extinct, nor yet altogether used up, we, in our triple character of editor, printer and devil, have compiled, set up, worked off and circulated this extra, which we hope will do our readers much good; for it will probably very much perplex his Satanic Majesty to tell at what precise period they will hear from us again."

The rival *Star*, clinging to the edge by its fingernails, had the dubious pleasure of setting up its rival's obituary:

"Gone to \_\_\_\_\_. The *Californian* ceased issue with the annunciatory slip of Tuesday last. Verdict of inquest—fever."

But the *Star* had no chortle in its voice. It fainted dead away by June 14th, Editor Kemble with his last gasp murmuring: ,

"In fewer words than are usually employed in the announcement of similar events, we appear before the remnant of a reading community with the material or immaterial information that we have stopped the paper—that its publication ceased with the last regular issue. We have done. Let our word of parting be, *Hasta luego.*"

All of the state of California was now without a newspaper.

## CHAPTER II

# Gold's in Them Presses!

EDITOR Bucklelew just never did believe in the mines. Kemble gave them a second fling, this time with a gold pan on his knee, while San Francisco gave up newspaper reading for the better things of life that were found with a pick and shovel.

Bucklelew turned out to be a better business man, for he sold his *Californian*, old type, busted press and all, to three partners—for its debts. In other words, Bucklelew got clear, the buyers agreeing to face the creditors for the paper's name and what fictitious good will it might have.

As it turned out, the debts were heavier than the presses and the three partners only talked about renewing publication. They did get out a sample on July 15, 1848. It told San Francisco for the first time of the Louis Napoleon coup, and it is interesting to note now the caption over the story:

THE WHOLE WORLD AT WAR!

The issue also said the municipal council had not met for two months because its members, along with most of the other city officials, had all "gone to the diggings."

Meanwhile, Kemble had found the mines just as big a disappointment as he had claimed previously to his readers. He came back, limping from blistered feet and with wornout back, more sure than ever that he was a newspaperman. He had \$800 left, which he gave to Mormon Sam Brannan for ownership of the defunct *Star*. He could find no financial backing to buy newsprint and so the *Star* was unable to shine forth.

Disappointed miners and those, like Kemble, who couldn't stand the pace, were struggling back to town. They didn't amount to much as either prospective subscribers or advertisers. Kemble told the three partners who owned the *Californian* that the town couldn't support one paper, let alone two, but that he might be willing to work out some sort of a merger. Meanwhile, neither paper published.

The partners discussed the proposition, but no one had the stuff that talks and is therefore able to close deals. Then, suddenly, Kemble found he owned both newspapers. The partners had walked out of town, left a note that Kemble could have the *Californian*, debts, rubbishy equipment, "good will"—free.

It was November before Kemble got enough newsprint to republish, so California was newspaperless for five months. On the day he issued the *Star & Californian*, a steamer was scheduled to leave for Panama, therefore he called it a Steamer Edition. Steamer Day in a short time became one of San Francisco's better traditions.

Steamers always left on the first and fifteenth of the month, so on the day previous to these dates collectors marched from one business house to another, accompanied by a youthful toter of the gold sack. Collectors balanced accounts for their Eastern offices, received payments, made their own, closed out deals. It was something like Chinese New Year when the financial slate must be wiped clean. They took pride in going unarmed, their gold sacks a bulging invitation to holdup men, not one of whom ever accepted the lure. Long after steamers quit the schedule, Steamer Days continued, for in San Francisco a tradition is an unwritten, sacred doctrine.

Kemble's new paper continued as regularly as money would permit until the end of the year. The editor, with the weight of two papers' debts on his rounding shoulders, fought off creditors by divvies from his job-printing sideline. Always he was on the watch for capital, and this he found one day in Edward C. Gilbert, Mexican War veteran, who had learned the printing trade on the Albany, New York, *Argus*.

Gilbert got half interest for underwriting half of the debts, and became senior editor in the bargain. And, walking into the new sunshine of Kemble's life, came another upper New York printer, George C. Hubbard, with ready cash to buy a one-fourth interest.

With faith renewed by Gilbert and Hubbard, Editor Kemble found himself in newspaper heaven: the only journal in a town with agonizing growing pains. Kemble got out a brochure calling for a new deal all around:

"A new arrangement, a new journal, a new name and new partners—all to begin with the New Year."

The new paper came out January 4, 1849, as the *Alta California*, and at once made money. This was not a very difficult achievement for within four months of the discovery of gold, \$850,000 in dust poured into the city and became a circulating medium at \$16 the ounce. The laborer who had received \$2 a day Before Gold, now got \$30 when he could be persuaded to work. The boom was on and it was going to be six months before the *Alta California* had a competitor.

At the beginning of '49, the population was 2,000. At the end of the year, 40,000 had landed in San Francisco and half stayed there or took a fast fling at the pick and shovel country and returned to the easier city life. The city councilmen had returned from the mines and in their first meeting officially recognized gambling as a "leading characteristic of the inhabitants." They passed a law permitting their deputies to seize "for the benefit of the city all money found on tables." (The gamblers got so angry that the law was repealed at the next session.)

Six hundred and ninety-seven vessels arrived, most of them with large passenger lists, in seven and a half months. Commercially the port of San Francisco was now equal in business to that of Philadel-

phia. A small room with a single bed rented for \$150 a month. Flour and pork were costing up to \$60 a barrel. Eggs sold for a dollar each. The few surgeons who were overworked patching up the violence victims had to pay a dollar a drop for laudanum. An old receipt shows \$40 paid for 40 drops.

Crime, of course, paid better than mining—and was easier on the back. No one wanted to be a policeman; the jobs went begging. Often there were no funds to pay what police the city did have, and it was hardly worth getting your head broken when there was not even a pay envelope to be had.

A strange, semi-military organization arose, called the Hounds. Originally, the Hounds' declared purpose was to "assist each other in sickness or when peril threatens." Members wore insignia and parades were marched on Sunday. But when night fell, the Hounds had a time for themselves, raiding the tents of the Chilenos, beating the defenseless, robbing them. The Chilenos had a large colony in the city. When the Hounds were on the move, the town was paralyzed. They moved in bands, under command, and struck hard and fast.

Citizens banded one Sunday and met the Hounds' parade head-on in a riot that lasted the afternoon and was messy and crude: clubs on heads and bloody faces and broken noses. It ended without decision.

With the criminal gangs, the Sydney Coves were banding, too. They were the ex-convicts from England's penal colonies at New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania). It was everyone for himself, and pistols and bowie knives became part of everyday costume.

Hundreds of gambling spots were in full blast. They had become a peculiar feature of the wild, expanding town, the only entertainment aside from the imported women and the saloons. It was monte, faro, roulette, rondo, rouge et noir and vingt-et-un. Poker was too slow and remained for the evenings in the mining-camp tents. There were some women in evening dress acting as croupiers. Bands were playing and in one place a hundred oil lamps blazed from the ceiling. Professional gamblers were the most influential men in town. Bets of \$20,000 on the turn of a card were common.

Two hundred sailing ships that had come around the Horn had been abandoned and lay rotting in the cove while the captains and crews raced to the mines. More than 3,000 seamen had deserted. (Not so long ago in sinking a foundation for a new building in Battery Street, the timbers and anchor of a ship were found.)

This was still 1849 and the city only a few years old, yet the famous Parker House—hotel, two stores, a saloon and game room—rented for \$120,000 a year. The El Dorado, a gambling saloon, only a canvas tent of moderate size, rented for \$40,000 a year. It was famous, and tradition holds that at the El Dorado "Prof." Jerry Thomas, the head bartender, invented the Tom & Jerry and the Blue Blazer, giving his own name to the former. A stable that took six horses rented for \$75,000. Money was borrowed at between 8 and 15 percent *per month* in advance and with real estate for security.

A movie flashback of the time would show in the afternoon *paseo* at Portsmouth Square, better known as the Plaza: hundreds of blue-clad Chinese with pigtails, their women in trousers; Negroes strutting in dandy clothes; Kanakas in briefs; Malays; tattooed New Zealanders; Fiji sailors; Hindus; Russians in furs; Spaniards in serapes; Chileans in robes; miners in dirty, baggy pants. Many would be on horseback.

And beyond this one might look farther into a dingy, narrow building with its tall windows where, keeping in tradition, two editors took their sudden prosperity without ostentation. It was the same old shop, the presses still without improvements, the stacks of newsprint piled in disorder, messes of ink still unwiped from the wooden floors, the desks marred, the chairs with broken backs. Yet there was speed now. A few men working at space rates were being added to the editorial payroll. The circulation was up. Competition had arrived. Kemble and Gilbert of the *Alta California* were about to put in a bid for a steam press. ,

## CHAPTER III

# The *Alta* Goes Daily

BEFORE the end of 1849, San Francisco had broken out with a rash of weeklies. Money was loose; the boom was swinging high. Nine new journals took a chance at making a living. Some faded almost at once; others carried on for a year or two.

The enterprising *Pacific News* started in August of 1849 as a tri-weekly, something no one else had dared. It was a good try and scared the *Alta California* editors, who were still running a weekly. The *Pacific News*, however, over-exerted its finances and died of a ruptured purse, within the year.

The *Alta* editors, alert to the future, were counting their money and drawing mental blueprints for a daily when the grapevine brought word that the *Daily Journal of Commerce* was coming into the field. Its name indicated what was happening to the city—as far as business was concerned—but the “Daily” part was what interested

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the *Alta California* editors. They just had to go daily now, and as 1850 came in, they beat the *Journal of Commerce* to the daily field by one day.

Business was so good for journals that an *Illustrated Times* was opened. It carried sketches, the first to be published in the state. And there was the first religious publication, the *Presbyterian Watchman*; the first French-language weekly, *La Gazette Républicaine*.

In the speeding whirl of a nebulous city, editors by the score spun and clung and spun and slipped away. Kemble was to write in 1858 that 132 periodicals had been started. Their owners, editors and reporters numbered more than 1,000.

"No city in the world," he wrote, "can boast a newspaper press so great in its development, so singular in its character, so wonderful in its fortunes. The papers have been printed in six different languages. Different nationalities have devoted themselves to the interests of religion, agriculture, news and slander; have preached eight different forms of religion, and have been organs of seven distinct political parties. The *Alta* and *Herald* are the only papers in the city which date from 1850, and both have been on the verge of the newspaper grave."

The names and histories of the papers that were to pass so swiftly along the journalistic skidroad are not important now. They ranged from so-called comic to the first newspaper for Negroes ever published. They had such names as *The Hombre*, the *Daily Whig*, *Satan's Bassoon*, the *Curiosity Shop*, the *Temperance Journal*, the *Present and Future*, *Bon Ton Critic*, *Young American of the Pacific*.

Newspapers, of course, reflect a town and its people, and it is not surprising that freaks should come and go as its odd people did and that, as the fortunes of the strange city went up and down, those of its journals should keep pace. In the early '50s, the town was an unruly child, lacking the iron rod of a parental government. Politics, always what might be termed lively, were already beginning to give off an odor.

One day the Council decided to pay its mayor and recorder salaries of \$10,000 each and its aldermen \$6,000. This stirred the citi-

zenry mightily, although that much money was often lost or won in a single poker hand. There were gatherings and speeches in the Plaza. It was decided to form a great parade and march upon the Council and oust them bodily.

That night the city burned down again, for the third time in two years—and thoughts went elsewhere. (The city was completely destroyed by fire, at a loss of millions, six times between December 24, 1849, and June 2, 1851.)

In 1850, the year in which California became a state, 36,000 people arrived, only 2,000 of them females, "many of whom were of base character and loose practices." Already there were several theaters, book and music stores, hotels, cafés and public carriages for the high-class trade. And this year the Society of California Pioneers was founded.

The plague of crime and the suspicious prevalence of catastrophic fires had so got beyond the epidemic stage that an angry hopelessness had set in upon editors. Edward Gilbert, newest editor of the daily *Alta California*, threw this to the careless city in June of 1851:

"Law is a ghost of its former self, or a distorted reflection of a good thing thrown back from a mirror of legal fools or knaves or both. We doubt if there is spirit enough among our people to even reprimand one of these throat slashers, were he caught in the act of strangling a child or setting fire to a church."

"It seems useless to write and talk to the people of San Francisco. They have lost all resentment. They love to be burned out. They seem to have set it down as one of their luxuries. It is something *recherché*. We look with apparent satisfaction upon the sprightly attempts of the recruits of penaldom to illuminate our city free gratis."

Editor John Nugent of the *Daily Herald*, however, had beat Editor Gilbert to the campaign. Early in the same year he had worked up the town with an editorial carrying a punch in every line:

"A Way to Stop Crime Which Stalks Abroad at Mid-day and Runs Riot Through Streets of San Francisco:

"There is clearly no remedy for the existing evil but the strong

arms and stout souls of the citizens themselves. Let us then organize a band of two or three hundred 'regulators' composed of such men as have stakes in this town. If two or three of these robbers were caught and treated to 'Lynch Law' their fellows would be more careful about future depredations."

Nugent, of course, was making an appeal for mass violence and apparently his editorial had remarkable pulling power beyond all dreams of editors, for shortly the mob was on the rampage.

Two hoodlums were arrested for a commonplace assault-robbery of a storekeeper. As they were placed in the city jail, a crowd began to gather. It had reached 5,000 within a few hours and a recently organized militia company was called out in time to beat off a rush at the prison.

With the crowd backed into Portsmouth Square before soldiers' bayonets, Mormon Leader Sam Brannan made a rousing speech to the rabble:

"The law and courts never yet hung a man in California. We are the mayor and the recorder, the hangman and the law. These men are murderers. I will die or see them hung by the neck."

Brannan wasn't going to do either right away, but his roaring voice helped to swell the crowd to 8,000 before nightfall. From all the alleys and streets and goat paths up the hills the men gathered to do something drastic about Thomas Berdue and his thieving friend, John Windred, who had beaten the tradesman.

With an activated audience produced for him by the brief but poignant speech of the Mormon, Lawyer Hall McAllister, the city's silver tongue, took over. (This was the McAllister, whose brother, Ward, was later to place upon New York society the title of "The Four Hundred.") And it was here, too, that William T. Coleman, later to be president of the famous Committee of Vigilance, stepped onto the stage for a go at civic betterment.

The mob was all for quick justice, served up hot. There was a constant but unorganized roar of "Hang them!" from the Plaza. McAllister and Coleman made calming speeches, calling for a fair trial, saying they would see justice done. The crowd quieted down, but did not break up.

While it argued within itself, Coleman, a businessman, went in to prosecute the pair, while McAllister, an expert lawyer, defended. McAllister got a hung jury, and wild scenes broke out in the Plaza when the announcement was made.

For thirty-six hours the mob howled outside and then slowly dwindled and faded, and the city was quiet.

Windred and Berdue got a second trial, were found guilty, and sentenced to fourteen years each. Then Berdue was identified as James Stuart, the murderer of the sheriff of Marysville. He was promptly sent there, convicted and sentenced to hang. And, the day he was sentenced, another Stuart was caught in San Francisco and also identified as the man wanted for the Marysville murder.

All this was confusing, and a trifle embarrassing. Windred had in the meantime sawed himself a hole through the floor of the jail and gone away, hastily. There was the galloping of horses as wild-riding messengers spurred on to Marysville. It was to be a movie finish against time—to bring word of the capture of the right man before the impatient officials put a rope around the neck of the wrong. The relay of horses made it before the hangman, and Berdue, whose name never was Stuart and who had nothing to do with the murder, was released and returned to San Francisco.

Here it was declared a sad mistake. Too many people had thought they saw the wrong man do the deed. Nothing intentional in all this. Mistakes can happen. A purse was gathered for Alias Stuart by those who had yelled so loudly for his death only a short time before. He was given a fistful of money and went back to his monte game on the wharf.

Meanwhile, newspapers were getting a firmer grip on their readers' emotions. Wee Willie Walker, pugnacious and courageous, later the filibuster who died before a firing squad in Honduras, was publisher of the *Daily Herald*, a lively sheet. In March, he wrote a stinging editorial about the crime wave and mentioned a definite laxness of the courts that left much to be corrected.

Up rose Judge Levi Parsons, who, feeling the finger had been pointed his way, haled Walker before him on contempt of court charges. Faced with a \$500 fine, fiery little Walker refused to pay

and went to jail instead. Again great excitement and gathering of the crowds, as papers cried out about freedom of the press, the Constitution and the rights of free speech.

The crowd was still not ready to exchange blows with the constituted authority. It contented itself with maintaining a high nuisance value around the city jail. There was a parade of about 4,000 through the streets, as leaders shouted for Judge Parsons to resign. It ended at the jail where the entire 4,000 decided to pay a visit to Publisher Walker in his small cell.

The doors stood the test, and the crowd continued to the Plaza for speeches. While these things were going on, a smart lawyer thought of the writ of habeas corpus and used it. Walker was freed. Learning this, the mob went away for drinks, Judge Parsons said he had enough, and the matter closed right there.



## CHAPTER IV

# The Vigilantes Arise

CAME now June of 1851 and formation of the strangest organization of its kind, the Committee of Vigilance. Here were banded several hundred of the most prominent men of the city in a secret society for the sole purpose of taking the law from the hands of those legally authorized to administer it. Committeemen wore no hoods or disguises and the membership list was not secret. Members were formed into military companies, armed with rifles. They were called to action by the tolling of the great bells atop each fire station.

The crime records of the day were appalling. Criminals, both professional and elective, were running the town. There had been an immigration of 200,000 strangers to California within a period of less than three years, and among them were some of the most daring, clever rascals in the world. The Hounds had continued to prosper, and there were now throughout the state secret combinations of

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thieves, burglars and murderers. There was an infamous "Alsatia" district where only denizens dared go after nightfall.

"There is little for the criminal to fear in merciful, gentle, careless California," said Editor Frank Soulé, of the *Daily California Chronicle*. "Jurors, eager to be at moneymaking again, are apt to take hasty charges from the bench; judges, chosen by popular election, are either grossly ignorant of law, or too timid or careless, corrupt or incapable, to measure out the full punishment of the law."

What Editor Soulé was saying in the complicated language of his short-lived *Chronicle* was that the judges were crooked, the prosecutors intimidated or dishonest, the police were grafters and the common persons just didn't care. Members of the Committee of Vigilance did care. They got their first case June 10, 1851, when stupid Johnnie Jenkins robbed a store. Committee members got him and his loot before the police did and decided to test out their power.

Fire bells tolled prearranged signals, the crowds gathered to get in on the fun; the committeemen took Jenkins into their rooms for a trial. Police at first were piqued that someone else had their prisoner, but when word came that thousands were gathered around the committee rooms judicial interest in Jenkins waned.

At midnight, the bells tolled again, announcing a verdict of death for dull-witted Jenkins who had thought he could run away with a safe on his back. The prisoner was taken to Portsmouth Square, across from the police station, shortly before 2 A.M. The crowd there had reached 5,000.

As the mob yelled for blood and policemen began pushing and pulling at the border of the crowd, solemn committeemen asked Jenkins if he had any last words.

"I wish I had a cigar," he said.

He got one and smoked it contentedly, his eyes roving the crowd for friends who might help. There had never been a lynching, and historians still argue that Johnnie Jenkins did not take it as seriously as a man should under the circumstances. It is also believed he expected last-minute rescue, as in the current Western melodramas.

All recorders of the event agree, however, that Jenkins had a surprised look on his face when the crowd suddenly surged forward,

grabbed the loose end of the rope that was over a beam—and ran with it. It was messy. Jenkins was a big fellow and fought as the rope dragged him along the ground and into the air. The mob took over while committeemen held the police off by exchanging punches with them. Jenkins, meanwhile, died miserably.

If his friends were unable to rescue him that night, they apparently got revenge two days later when the city burned down once more and left 1,200 homeless. The fire was without doubt incendiary, and, so police said, inspired by lads from the "Alsatia" district where Jenkins had lived.

Reporting of the lynching gave the newspapers their first chance at realistic writing. All of them covered it fully, the majority leaning toward the lynchers. The account in the *Alta California* ended with this touch of drama:

"As we close this article, the corpse of the doomed man is swinging in the night air, surrounded by a guard of the Committee of Citizens. What the result of this affair will be we cannot predict. We trust it will be salutary."

A few days later, this same newspaper, now far ahead in circulation and earnings, editorialized in no uncertain terms about the value of mob action:

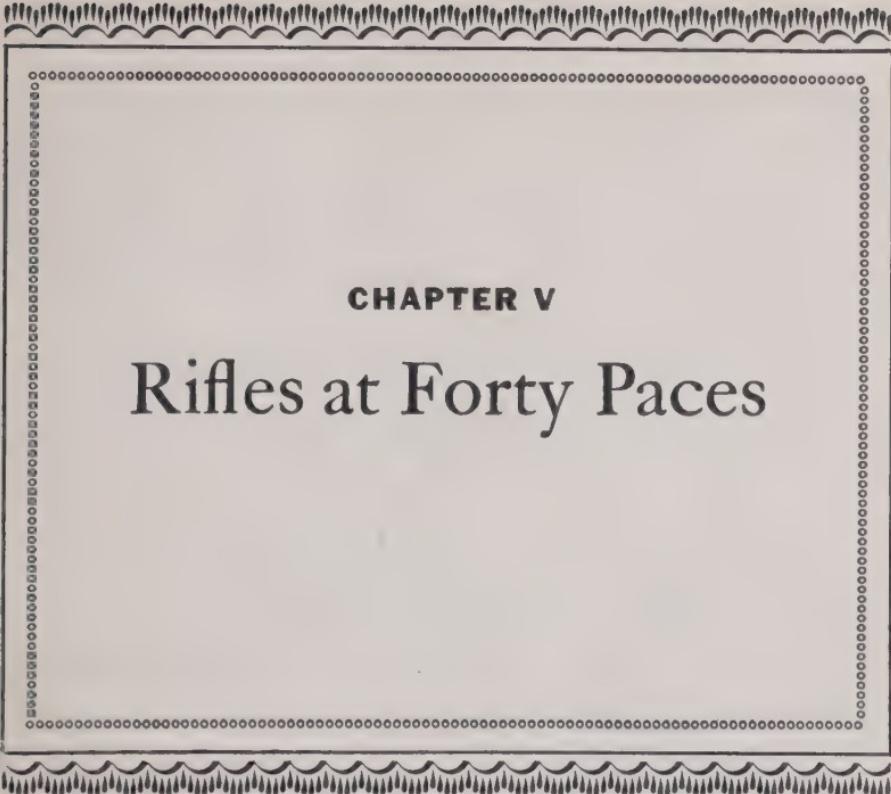
"A determination exists on part of many of our citizens, men of standing, character and influence, to visit any infraction of law with summary punishment without tarrying for the tardy operation of the law on the part of the legalized authorities.

"Extraordinary circumstances justify extraordinary measures. The first scene in the drama has been enacted. We have never been advocates of lynch law, yet in the present condition of our municipal affairs, we cannot conscientiously condemn the people for the course they have felt themselves compelled to adopt.

"We must admit that necessity absolutely demanded the assumption of power. It is useless to prate of the majesty of the law, for, alas! we have had but a sorry representation of its majesty as administered."

All papers published the full list of Vigilante members, declaration of principles, officers.

The committee continued for some weeks, doing an execution or two and ordering two dozen lashes for a Mexican caught with stolen goods. Criminals began to leave in droves. The city quieted down for a while; judges left off their secret conferences before court; the committee went inactive.



## CHAPTER V

# Rifles at Forty Paces

IN 1852, it was proved that only figuratively is the pen mightier than the sword. Edward Gilbert, senior editor of the *Alta California* and a Mexican War veteran, had gone into politics, becoming one of the state's first Congressmen. As a Congressman he was a politician, but as an editor he was a crusader against political expediencies. One day he wrote a sarcastic editorial concerning the state's efforts to relieve immigrants now becoming troublesome in the Sierra snows.

The usual band of inexperienced travelers was snowed in—and looking hungrily at each other, of course—so Governor John Bigler ordered General J. W. Denver to take out a relief party. Denver, for whom the capital city of Colorado would be named, later became California's Secretary of State.

The General, who liked pomp, galloped his rescue party out of Sacramento toward the Donner Pass with flying colors, literally. He

changed to sleds later and got there in time to bring the party back alive. It was a parade, wrote Editor Gilbert, a disgraceful exhibition of making political capital out of misery. Denver was bothered when he read the editorial and sent to a Sacramento paper a letter in which he "animadverted on the terms of those observations." Gilbert thought the General's language objectionable and challenged. The soldiers chose rifles at forty paces.

On August 2nd, before the heat of the valley had arisen and the sun was breaking over the misty rolling hills, they met at Oak Grove near the state's capital. There were the usual darkly dressed seconds and the attending physicians as the forty paces were deliberately marked off.

The men finally faced each other and the word passed. Gilbert missed; the General turned his rifle aside and his bullet struck far away. The principals stood on their marks as the seconds conferred. Had each been satisfied? The General had. The editor had not. Gilbert demanded a second shot because, he said, General Denver had once ridiculed bloodless duels.

Gloomy seconds returned and reloaded the rifles. Denver was now angry and his jaw was set. The word to fire was given. There was a sharp report from the General's rifle and Gilbert sprawled. The slug had struck him just above the left hip. He lived only a few moments. He said nothing, just smiled weakly at his second.

Gilbert had been a popular man in the state and his newspaper was in a leading position in San Francisco. When his body was brought to Sacramento, two companies of militia marched to the roll of drums behind the coffin to the river steamer. Upon arrival at San Francisco, ships in the bay placed flags at half mast, public buildings and private homes were draped with mourning, and the newspapers appeared with black lines down their columns.

(In 1884 there were echoes of this famous duel. General Denver had been elected Congressman from California in 1855 and later appointed by President Buchanan as Governor of the Territory of Kansas. He had fought with an excellent record as a Brigadier General through the Civil War and was now one of the leading Democrats of the nation. He was about to be brought up for

nomination as President of the United States. Republican newspapers hastened to remember the duel. Stories piled out of the past—he had deliberately murdered the poor, stumbling, near-sighted editor. The Democrats replied that Gilbert was also a soldier and knew his rifle; that the General had asked to clasp hands after the first shot and Gilbert had sullenly refused. It was the newspaper row of the nation. People were aroused against duelists about that time, and the Democrats thought it was unwise to press General Denver for the nomination—and Grover Cleveland, a *Democrat*, won.)

While journals were now beginning to strike out at the stupidity of duels, they had really become amusement—something like prize fights. Frank Soulé, who in 1854 wrote his *Annals of San Francisco* (824 hand-set pages), said this:

“There is little delicate privacy observed. On the contrary, the parties, or their immediate friends, invite all their acquaintances, who invite others to go and witness the proposed engagement. It is sometimes announced the day before in the newspapers—time, place, parties, weapons, and every particular of the ceremony being faithfully given. Of course, the spectators are much disappointed should nobody be slain. If the bloody entertainment be advertised to ‘come off’ at Benicia or somewhere in Contra Costa, the steamers of the eventual morning are densely packed with those who prefer the excitement of a gladiatorial show to the dull pursuits of business, or loafing about the streets.”

The city went on its dizzy way, however. United States coins began to make regular appearances, where two years before the English shilling, the two-bit piece, French franc, the Mexican double-real were all the same value and accepted as legal tender. Upon the store counters began to drop the \$50 gold pieces, called slugs, and the \$20 and \$10 gold pieces now being issued by the government assay office in San Francisco.

A “society” began to evolve, and brilliant balls, with carriage and four at the door, were now frequent. But the revolver was still carried as commonly as a cane, “even by first-class citizens.”

There were, said the indignant *Christian Advocate*, 537 saloons in the city, “125 of them without as much as an onion to modify the

traffic." Forty-six were also gambling houses and forty-eight places were "kept by bawds." There were 743 bartenders in the city, or one for every fifty persons, including children.

It was in this halcyon period of 1853 that Editor Walker gave up baiting judges in his *Herald* and struck out on his own into something more exciting. He opened an office on one of the most prominent corners, seeking recruits for filibustering. The flag of the mythical Republic of Lower California flew there. He printed scrip and circulated it among the jobbers at a discount. He got considerable amounts of money from wealthy San Franciscans who hoped to cash in later on the new nation to be carved out of the next-door neighbor. The United States was not at war with Mexico, was no longer even angry at it, and every action of Editor Walker was illegal.

When the expedition sailed, its strange assortment of thugs, bankrupt gentlemen and wassailing adventurers was cheered by thousands who lined the shores of the Golden Gate, and by most newspapers that had carried full reports all during the recruiting.

Soulé, editor of the *Daily California Chronicle*, was one of the few journalists who saw anything sinister or unpatriotic in Walker's strange scheme.

"The vast majority of Walker's followers," he wrote, "can only be viewed as desperate actors in a true filibustering or robbing speculation. If they succeed, they might lay the sure foundations of fortunes; if they fail, it was only time and perhaps a life lost. In either event, there is a grand excitement in the game."

"On departure of the expedition, the recorder's (police) court at San Francisco had much less daily business, and the city was happily purged of many of the old squad of rowdies and loafers."

Forty-six filibusters left early in 1853; to be followed in December by 240 more. The first forty-six sailed in a barque to La Paz, where they landed with a whoop upon bewildered natives, scattering them into the sand hills.

The little editor with the Napoleonic complex secured the governor, proclaimed the independence of Lower California, declared the civil code of Louisiana the law of the land, hauled down the Mexican flag and hoisted that of the new republic. All this, with notable American enterprise, happened within a half hour.

Walker, with a completed cabinet and all the other trimmings of a republic, now retreated without apparent cause to Ensenada, below San Diego, and called for reinforcements from the States.

Editor Soulé wrote: "The national flag of the new republic is again run up here at the corner of Kearny and Sacramento Streets, and an office opened for the purpose of enlisting recruits.

"More volunteers appeared than there are means of conveying to the scene of action. The authorities meanwhile look calmly on, and take no steps to prevent departure of the filibusters. People in private circles laugh and talk over the business coolly. They generally think, and say, it is all right—at all events, it is a fine specimen of go-aheadism of Young America."

Walker, however, had gone for plunder, and to this day no one has found much of that in the country around Ensenada. The usual story got around camp that the officers were dining well while the privates starved. Disgruntled soldiers began sauntering from camp and, when at a proper distance, going into double time—over the hill. "General" Walker went hurriedly from the pen to the sword. He ordered two deserters shot, two flogged.

This was not a popular move. The recruiting sergeants had plainly said it would be loot and gold in the hills and Mexican women all over the place. Instead it was dry hills and sagebrush and heat and sweat in the eyes and nothing to do. Ragged troops defied officers, who, in turn, defied Walker. In the end, he was an unhappy, lonely man, a poor strategist who blundered and got the firing squad.

When news of the fate of the expedition reached San Francisco, newspapers screamed for blood, demanded the government do something, enforce the law. How did Washington permit such a disgraceful affair? A number of secondary leaders wandered back to San Francisco in the midst of this baying of the press and found themselves clapped into jail, all charged with violation of neutrality. After much legal sparring, fines of \$1,000 were handed out. Not one defendant had it. All was forgiven, forgotten.

There were other trends of the times: In 1854, a number of guarded accounts appeared in papers concerning the wreck of a valuable cargo vessel at the Golden Gate. A clipper ship, San Francisco from New York, in tacking in through the Heads, struck the north

shore of the Gate, where today rests a tower of the "longest single-span bridge in the world." Passengers were taken off when it was found thirteen feet of water was in the hold. The weather was fair and the sea smooth, and there was hope that much of the cargo would be saved.

It soon became known that the ship was helpless and had a cargo worth about \$150,000. From this point, most newspapers were silent except to record that several small boats had been lost around the wrecked clipper when a violent southeaster came up.

Editor Soulé, however, didn't worry about the city's reputation, since he felt it didn't have one. He wrote:

"The wreck was attended by circumstances very discreditable to some of the people in and around the city. So soon as the occurrence was known, a multitude of plunderers hastened to the wreck, and proceeded to help themselves from the ship's hold. It was in vain that the owners or their agents attempted to drive them away.

"Some two hundred dare-devil Americans, nearly all armed with the usual weapons, five- or six-shooters and bowie knives, were not to be frightened by big words. They stood their ground, and continued to take and rob as they pleased, plundering from each other as well as the ship. It is said that some of the soldiers from the Presidio crossed the strait, and became wreckers themselves."

The ship's officers shot a couple of the pirates, but they went right about their thieving, stopping only long enough to band together in enough strength to overpower the crew. It was a definite spirit of piracy, openly displayed, and every man for himself or his gang.

Vengeance for the owners came through one of those "acts of God." February is usually a month in which San Francisco weather is very, very good or very, very bad.

A southeast storm hit the scores of small boats about the wreck and scattered them before they could pull into the lee of the cove. Such a storm blows out the Gate and so small craft, their crews and their heavy loot, went that direction, which is the wrong way. Just how many perished is not told in the cautious newspaper reports, although, the bold Soulé reported, "at least a dozen were drowned in the midst of their unhallowed occupation."

San Francisco appears to have taken the incident with its pioneer

philosophy. It was a game, somewhat dangerous, and if you got killed at it then it was rather one on you.

In this year, invitations to editors to be guests of honor at duels reached an all-time peak, and newsmen were really getting shot. Editor Soulé wrote that the journalistic professional motto was: "Tam Marte quam Minerva," which he translated, most freely, as "by pen and rifle to do business." One editorial wit is supposed to have had a placard over his desk:

"Subscriptions received from 9 to 4; challenges from 11 to 12 only!"

Personal journalism was warming up. Editors were serious about their politics, their prejudices and their predilections. They were willing to back them with their fists or their pistols or their knives, and stood ready to shoot anyone but a subscriber.

Civic problems had become urgent. Misgovernment, political corruption, criminal promotion schemes and the slavery question were beginning to plague the Far West. Editors, meeting in saloons or on street corners, often converted their editorial grudges into action, with, occasionally, a knife in the fist.

The editor of the *Evening Picayune*, A. C. Russell, exchanged honor shots with the noted Captain Joseph Folsom, a West Pointer, without injury to either, and later fought a second duel with bowie knives. He was badly cut up in the knife action.

Affairs of honor became so definitely a part of public life that an odd character signing himself "J. Walker, care of the San Francisco Post Office," placed this advertisement in the *Golden Era* of May 15, 1853:

"To Editor, Legislator and all whom it may concern: The undersigned, desiring to 'turn an honest penny' would respectively inform Editor, Legislators and others, whose moral and religious scruples may prevent their willingness 'to stand and face the music,' that he will at the shortest notice and on the most liberal terms, engage to fight duels with pistols, rifles or bowie knives, or, if preferable, 'strike from the shoulder.' "

There is no record anyone engaged his services, and apparently no newspaper of the day thought the advertisement worthy of a follow-up feature about J. Walker.

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Two editors finally decided to keep the business for once strictly between themselves. C. A. Washburn was now editor of the *Alta California*, having replaced the slain Gilbert. He was against slavery. B. F. Washington, editor of *The Times and Transcript*, was pro-slavery. They exchanged shots at twenty paces and Washburn was badly hurt. He survived to become editor of the *Evening Journal* in 1855.

John Nugent, while editor of the *Herald*, got into two shooting duels, both with aldermen who didn't like the sneering tone of his editorials on city deals. The first was with Alderman Colter over the city's purchase for \$250,000 of the old Jenny Lind Theater for a public building. The alderman got in the first bullet, which fractured the editor's thigh. He recovered in time to battle Alderman Thomas Hayes and get a compound fracture of the arm.

And so it went: Editors of the German weekly, *California Demokrat*, and the French *Le Phare* were wounded, not, as might be expected, by fighting each other but by irate subscribers. Then came the bitter and tragic duel between Editor G. P. Johnston of the *Globe* and State Senator W. I. Ferguson.

Johnston, it should be mentioned, was also a legislator and, more noticeably, author of the state's anti-dueling law.

Ferguson, a lawyer from Kentucky, liked the bottle too well. His antics in the State Senate were described in the candid press of the day as "such a roystering performance that he has become known as 'Yip-see Doodle.'"

The two met one day in the famous Bank Exchange saloon, whose old time proprietor, Duncan Nicol, concocted the potent Pisco Punch that is still a mystery to the world's bartenders. It was made secretly in the basement and sent up by dumbwaiter. In this congenial atmosphere, Ferguson made a slighting remark anent a lady friend of Johnston and guns flipped out of hip pockets as if on springs. Innocent bystanders ducked under tables as friends grabbed their pistol arms. Next day Johnston demanded an apology, was refused, and challenged. It was as simple as that.

Ferguson, the challenged party, chose pistols. They took rowboats to Angel Island in the center of San Francisco Bay and were followed by more than one hundred small craft. With this great crowd

of witnesses, the stony-faced seconds measured off the distance: pistols at ten paces (thirty feet).

At the first shots, both missed. So, under a vicious agreement, the distance was lessened five feet. The second exchange again missed. The distance was now reduced to twenty feet. Again misses. The fourth shots were fired from fifteen feet, and both were wounded, Ferguson in the right thigh, Johnston in the left wrist.

Ferguson was taken back to San Francisco in his second's boat, followed by a parade of sightseers' small craft that was more than a mile long. Doctors told Ferguson he should have his leg amputated, but he refused until it was too late. He died under the knife.

Johnston was indicted under the law of which he was author. He was tried in San Rafael and acquitted on the ground that it was Ferguson's own fault he had died, since he waited too long for an operation. Florid orations for Ferguson were given before the Legislature in which it was lamented that the late Senator drank far too much and had a wicked temper.

To vary the monotony of pistols and rifles, there followed an out-sword-and-at-'em performance between two Frenchmen, both being pinked by rapiers. Newspapers began to fuss about duels taking up valuable space and refused to record the affairs unless the participants were unusually prominent or fatalities resulted. Ministers added their voices also, but the public, according to that fine source Editor Soulé, "merely looked wise, savage and virtuous, and talked and drank; then it looked wiser, and so on, and talked and drank again."

Newspapers went on starting and stopping, no matter how many editors got killed. In April of 1854, the first Chinese newspaper in the United States was issued. It was a small sheet of four pages, wholly printed in Chinese characters, called *The Gold Hill News*. (Gold Hills was then the Chinese name for San Francisco.) Besides English, there were now foreign newspapers in French, German, Spanish and Chinese.

## CHAPTER VI

# Enter James King of William

THERE were prophetic signs by early 1854 that the great boom was beginning to slide over the edge. The trek of the disappointed was toward the East. It had been riches for the very few; the others, wearied by bad luck, were homeward bound, wise and poor. The winter of 1854-55 was gloomy with the realization that the city's first real depression was on.

Into this darkened scene, the melancholy figure of James King of William entered and began to hold the public attention. He was a tall, angular, bony man with a bearded face and small, tight mouth. He wore the conventional black business clothes: cylindrical trousers caught under the instep; an alpaca coat, rather tight; a linen, upright, single collar with large, black, loosely caught bow tie. A talma, which was a knee-length flowing cape, was thrown about his shoulders on damp days.

He had arrived at his odd name by his own choosing. When still a young boy in Georgetown, D. C., he announced to his friends that "James King" was a most undistinguished name for one who really wanted to get out into the realm of big men. Besides, there were already a dozen other James Kings in his own town. So he added "of William" to his name. His father's first name was William. Other members of his family and his own children maintained the name of King.

King of William had come to San Francisco in 1847, among the first, and opened a small bank. The frantic financial activities of the Gold Rush made him a millionaire. Now the good times were ended.

In 1855, many large banks, including the Adams & Company and Page, Bacon & Company, through whom, during good times, miners sent home more than half a million dollars each month, went to the wall. The small fry were sucked into the sudden maelstrom. Banker King was one of the little fellows. One day he was a millionaire, the next he was without a cent. Everything he had was involved. He turned all assets over to his creditors and began wandering the streets seeking employment. There were no jobs. He was only thirty-four years old and a determined, ambitious man with a wife and six small children to look after.

As he walked the streets, he later wrote, he saw queues of discouraged miners, their sweat-smeared gold gone with the banks, seeking passage home. He read the papers and saw the list of suicides mounting day by day. He noticed that city finances were again in low estate, and knew that much of the money missing from the community treasury had disappeared into the maw of a political machine, controlled by graduates of old Tammany Hall of New York. He knew personally the facts that Historian Hittell was to record in future years:

"Vilest ruffians were publicly employed by politicians with instructions to carry certain wards. When election day approached, associations were publicly formed for the purpose of selling their votes to the highest bidder. Gangs of men marched or went in wagons from ward to ward voting in each. Some ballot boxes had false sides, in which fraudulent ballots were hidden in advance."

Hittell was writing about Judge Ned McGowan and his gang of

professionals. McGowan had been superintendent of police for a district of Philadelphia and come west under a cloud of suspicion when a bank was robbed.

The toughest yegg in the crew was Yankee Sullivan, a very handy fellow with his fists, as he had proved in 1842 when he beat Tom Secor in sixty-seven rounds, Staten Island, barefist. His last fight before coming out to take care of things for the Judge had been on Boston Common in 1848, which ended in a riot. His political finesse had come while operating a Tammany Hall hangout, the Sawdust House saloon in Walker Street, New York. He had a trick ballot box with false compartments into which the right ballots could be placed before the election.

Billy Mulligan, city jailer under patronage of Judge McGowan, was just five feet tall and slight, but wickedly mean. He had been a professional blackleg in New York.

James P. Casey, editor of the *Sunday Times*, fitted quite snugly into the gang. He had become a supervisor—by gift of Yankee Sullivan and his trick ballot box. This charge the *Alta California* made in direct language:

"The manner of his (Casey) gaining a seat in the board of supervisors is yet fresh in the minds of the community.

" . . . A ballot box, presided over by Sullivan, et al, at the Presidio, was so arranged that four or five days after election, it hatched out Casey for supervisor where he never thought of being a candidate until the election was over. He has probably done more stuffing and ticket shifting than any man in the world. He has accumulated \$30,000, yet never was known to do an honest day's work."

Casey truckled to Boss McGowan and was high enough up in the cabal to discuss occasionally with the Judge the manner in which the latter should make a court decision. McGowan was not a wealthy man and there is no evidence that he was a grafter. He wanted power and had it; he was able to reinstate policemen and aid in promotions, accepting only homage in return. It was in his court the previous year that an assistant prosecutor—angry and young—yelled above the friendly, congratulatory clamor at a prisoner's acquittal:

"I protest this levity, Your Honor! For the record, I wish to state

that in the past four years there have been 1200 murders in this city and only one conviction. For shame, San Francisco!"

So James King of William, who had been a printers' devil as a lad, decided to start a crusading newspaper. He wanted to make a living for the half dozen children at home, but also he wished to see a few angry words taken from his simmering mind and put into cold, public print. On October 8, 1855, he gathered a few dollars from friends and started his stinging wasp, the *Evening Bulletin*. He had no illusions. In his first edition he said:

"The apparent folly of starting a newspaper in this city where so many already exist, and at this time when so few are barely doing that, would seem to demand some explanation. Necessity, not choice, has driven us to make this experiment. If successful, we shall be able to feed, clothe and shelter our family in San Francisco."

This was honest enough, but not the whole story. Behind King's founding of the *Bulletin* was a remarkably cold, furious hatred for the moneyed interests, born of the sudden catastrophic failure of his tiny bank. He blamed dishonesty of the larger bankers for the loss of his fortune, for the fatal run on his and the others came as a result of financial manipulations of the larger institutions.

In the 1855 crisis, the first bank to go had been the wealthiest, Page, Bacon & Company. It had a spectacular reputation, begun with a glamorous tradition of having purchased in one day twenty million dollars' worth of gold dust over its counter. William Tecumseh Sherman, then a banker in San Francisco, was the one who might have prevented the crash had the company officials been friendlier.

Sherman, a West Pointer, had come to California first during the Mexican War as a Junior First Lieutenant. He therefore saw no action. In fact, he had so much idle time on his hands that his general told him to pick up a few side jobs if he could. So, among other jobs, he surveyed the town site of Benicia, which ex-Editor Dr. Semple of the state's first newspaper, the *Californian*, thought was going to be the New York of the West. Young Sherman got \$500 for the job and ten lots. He sold the lots for another \$500, which, he said, was a good deal since he knew the town would never amount to much.

In 1850 he was back in Washington, D. C., and finally was sent by

the Army to New Orleans. There he received a letter from an intimate friend, Major Turner, who was in San Francisco in charge of the bank of Lucas, Turner & Company. The Major wanted Sherman to take over his job while he went east. Sherman took a six months' leave and went to San Francisco to look over the proposition. En route his ship was wrecked above the Golden Gate, the passengers being saved by taking to the small boats. Finally, in San Francisco, he accepted the job and resigned the Army in September of 1853.

The stone building that Sherman constructed for his bank in San Francisco cost \$82,000 and is still standing at the corner of Jackson and Montgomery Streets. Sherman was a good banker, very severe and honest and careful, and his was one of the few banking institutions that withstood the panic. He had had inside information that the rival Page, Bacon & Company was forwarding to the home office all its money in gold dust or bricks. The practical Sherman knew this was an unhealthy sign, that it was also window dressing, for guarded gold shipments were for the purpose of giving New York depositors a feeling of security.

On February 17, 1855, a small mail steamer came in through the Golden Gate and ran close to Meiggs' Wharf to throw ashore the special-delivery express parcels. A man aboard it yelled to a friend on the wharf that the New York office of Page, Bacon & Company had failed. The news ran wild. Lines began to form before the bank, which hastily issued a statement saying all branches of the institution were autonomous. The damage had been done, however. The bank paid out \$600,000 on the first day.

That night Sherman slipped into Page, Bacon & Company through a rear door and found the officials in sullen consultation. Harry Haight, the president, had been drinking, and when Sherman offered him gold coin for bullion and certain notes he got nasty. Sherman, insulted, walked out. On the fourth day, the bank ran out of cash. Assets were good, but now Sherman refused to lend gold on them. The bank closed.

The panic was contagious and Sherman's own bank was feeling the general pressure of increased withdrawals. In the midst of this agitation, Supervisor James Casey, who had the office of his *Sunday*

*Times* on the third floor of Sherman's bank building, began to stir up depositors with false stories. Sherman took long, military steps to the third floor. There he collared the man who always carried a derringer and pushed him about the room. He dragged him, finally, to the window and said in his best Army manner that if the editor persisted he would come back and toss him down to the street. Casey got other quarters at once—on a ground floor, and even there did not repeat his charges.

The Adams' Bank went next. It put out a half million dollars in gold and then failed to open. Bitter yells were heard. It was known the vaults still held many thousands. A mob gathered before the courthouse as lawyers inside demanded satisfaction for clients. At this point, two unusual characters in San Francisco's financial history came into the picture: Lawyer Alfred A. Cohen and Auctioneer Abia A. Selover. Alf Cohen, slick, careful, scheming, was later to be a millionaire. Selover, solid, careful, scheming, already was a millionaire.

The first court action was to make Cohen and Selover receivers of the Adams' Bank, the former to control the assets, the latter the physical properties. Cohen's first act was to back a wagon up against the bank's side door and cart away about \$600,000, all of it in those beautiful gold slugs.

Meanwhile, a mob was before the windows of the Palmer, Cook Bank. It was lined up, orderly, many with baskets and bags to take out their gold. San Franciscans had always considered greenbacks worthless. As the run continued, the Palmer Bank's president asked Cohen for a loan of the \$600,000 taken from the Adams' Bank. And from that moment on, the story becomes confused, and will remain forever so.

Shortly thereafter Cohen was hauled into court to explain his failure to pay off depositors. He said he had sent the entire \$600,000 to the Palmer Bank. The judge thereupon called before him Edward Jones, a member of the Palmer firm, and that worthy was very arrogant indeed. Banker Jones refused to talk. He wouldn't say yes and he wouldn't say no. He merely shook his head when asked if he would tell anything about that \$600,000. He was scolded loudly by the judge and rushed away finally, calling for his attorneys to do

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something about his besmirched reputation. Counsel ordered silence and a lot of it.

Lawyer Cohen was now peeking through prison bars. The charges were embezzlement of the \$600,000. Selover was then ordered to liquidate the bank's real estate. This he refused to do. He held that the missing \$600,000 was part of the whole and nothing could be done until all monies were disclosed and accounted for.

Months had passed while the courts wrangled and ex-banker James King of William—whose private bank went among the first—had his *Bulletin* going. He remarked now in print that the hands of both Selover and Cohen were somewhat sticky. He demanded that Cohen be held in jail without bail. He said this man was going to disappear one of these fine days, just as had the big pile of other people's money in the Adams' Bank. Then, he wrote, there would be real confusion, if the depositors thought they could stand any more of it.

Cohen did run away. The first time he was nabbed within a few hours in a nearby town to which he had fled on horseback. His second attempt was a rather good try. The steamer *Uncle Sam* was in the bay with steam up for Panama. If one could get across the Isthmus and on the boat for New York—that was 3,000 hard miles from San Francisco. Cohen's friends got him aboard the steamer, but some of those angry miners were watching. A posse arrived aboard and a fellow finally dug him out from under the shaft. Lawyer Cohen was a soggy bundle when dragged from the oil and bilge water and King made the most of it in the *Bulletin*.

That night, Fred Cohen, brother of Alf, started a tradition of his own. He stoned the windows of the *Bulletin* office—and glass so hard to get! He stood in the street and threw stones and made no attempt to say another fellow did it when a policeman rapped him over the head with a billy. He paid a small fine, proudly, and took up waving gaily to passers-by who now bowed to him as a person of new importance. From that day on, every time that King printed nasty remarks about Alf, Brother Fred came around in the evening and pasted the windows of the newspaper office with stones. And when his aim was good and he busted glass he paid for it, gladly. When he missed, he wasn't arrested.

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The first time Fred stoned the *Bulletin* was important. It gave King his initial opportunity to break out with an extra. It was the first extra in the city and of no great value. But in the personal journalism of the day, King felt, and somewhat rightly, that the city would enjoy the facts. It was, apparently to King, more important than when Alf Cohen finally went into court on the embezzlement charge.

At that session Cohen testified that \$269,000 of the \$600,000 had gone to the Palmer Bank. There was, however, no such transaction recorded in his books. But he maintained that if the Palmer Bank's books were brought into court undoubtedly the sum would be shown there as received. He just sat in the witness chair and stared back at the judge and made this remark.

The Adams' Bank's president accepted, with the proper amount of annoyance, a subpoena. He, too, sat back in the witness chair and stared at the judge. He said he had made every effort to find the bank's books of the dates under consideration. The books simply were not about. Of course, deputies, properly accredited by the court, could search his building. They did. He was right. There were no books.

A bewildered public groaned and a moody judge rustled pages of his big books looking for a precedent and the newspapers called names and cried for prison gates to yawn greedily for certain bankers. Then came the news that a fisherman had snagged the bank's missing books in the bay. The books were dried and rushed into court. With the proper legal gestures the books were opened—and the pages of the dates of the transaction had been torn out!

On this day in banking history, too, the depositors were informed that, strangely, Isaac S. Woods, one of the partners of the Adams' Bank, was now in Australia, having left San Francisco without fanfare or brass bands. Mr. Woods was the man who originally had the \$600,000 in his vaults. It was just too much for the bewildered jury. Cohen was let go, and to this day it is not known, officially, what happened to the gold.

King laid into both Selover and Cohen for months. The auctioneer, being dignified by wealth, threatened duels, and the editor answered with the famous note that opens this book.

This was the kind of noise that always vibrates the excitable heart strings of San Franciscans, and, without getting hurt, Editor King won first round and a lot of new circulation. On January 24, 1856, he announced his run-off was 5,050 copies. He began crusading with a will, using the Cohen-Selover fiasco as a catapult platform for a general shot at the prevalence of crime.

"It is more of a crime to steal a mule than to garrote a human being," he wrote, and, later, printed a little chart to show the record for the year 1855:

	1st quarter:	2nd qrt:	3rd qrt:	4th qrt:	Total:
Total killed:	120	99	208	60	487
Hung by sheriff:	2	—	2	2	6
Hung by mobs:	8	14	18	6	46

Next month he was growling at his competitors, charging they had failed to come along with him in his campaign to clean up the city. His loudest bellow, at the *Alta California*, was accompanied by harsh music—the blowing up of his steam boiler that turned the wheels. The roar could be heard for a mile, and everyone, including the volunteer fire laddies, came running. Editor King thanked them gravely, gathered up his forms, got a wagon and trudged over to the *Alta* and begged use of its steam press. The next day, after his boiler was stuck together and strapped down again, he wrote:

"It was a pity we had been pitching into them the same day they were helping us, and if we had only known the old boiler was about bursting, we should have kept back for one day that article on the *Alta*."

Within two weeks, however, he was sadly shaking his head at the *Alta* again, telling how "Brothers Pickering and Fitch, props." had hired a man to sit outside the *California Chronicle* window and count the strokes of the engine. This was a fairly accurate method (the press moved so slowly) to count the other fellow's circulation. King made a brief editorial sermon out of the affair, enabling him to slip in between ideas a snap or two of his galluses:

"Our circulation," he mused in passing, "is now double that of the *Alta* or the *Chronicle* and more than double that of the *Herald*."

It was 6,200.

## CHAPTER VII

# Murder at the Street Corner

WHEN James King was logging the murders he spotted well up toward the top the fact that Charles Cora, professional gambler, murderer of United States Marshal W. H. Richardson, had been in prison for better than six months, awaiting re-trial. The Marshal had, during a drinking bout, complained about his wife being forced to sit next to Cora's mistress at the theater, and Cora stabbed him. Belle Cora, a madam, hired excellent lawyers who won a jury disagreement. Now Cora was comfortably resting in jail.

The *Bulletin's* editor also continued to keep under his flinty pen that shadowy, smiling figure, Judge Ned McGowan—Ned the Ubiquitous, who, like Abia Selover, was to be always around when someone else was getting hurt. Lately, McGowan had been coaching Casey, whose *Sunday Times* had become the unofficial organ of the Yankee Sullivan-Billy Mulligan political thug gang.

About this time, King's older brother, Thomas, sought appointment as United States Marshal and lost it. Whereupon Editor King began to write angrily about the lack of ability of the successful candidate. Casey's newspaper at once took up the battle. In his *Times* there appeared "a card," now known as a letter to the editor. It was signed "Caliban," nom de plume often used by Judge McGowan. It said King's real purpose was to throw up a screen before the irregularities at the Customs House, where Thomas King worked. Brother Thomas made a demand upon Casey for the identity of the card's writer, and was refused.

Casey, upset and expecting trouble with the King brothers, conferred with McGowan, who pronounced Thomas King a harmless "poltroon who would not bring the matter to an issue of arms." But the next day Casey saw Thomas at a pistol gallery having his derringer cleaned and loaded, and carried this portentous news to the judge. McGowan told him to face it out.

Thomas King met Casey and McGowan the next day.

"Again," said King, "I ask you, Casey, to tell me the name of the man who slandered me in your paper."

McGowan stood by without a word; Casey straightened himself and said: "I wrote it myself. Does that satisfy you?"

King did not reach for his derringer. Instead he said: "Oh, I thought a gentleman had written it," and turned away.

McGowan roared with laughter and made his first remark since the encounter: "See, Casey, how correct has been my opinion of the man's poltroonery."

Casey, feeling much better, went back to his office to get out a paper. McGowan, smiling quietly, went back to his court.

When Casey picked up the *Bulletin's* next issue, he flushed angrily and went at once to find the judge. They looked it over together. There was a notice in the newspaper that in a coming issue Casey would be disclosed as an ex-convict from Sing Sing, who had served eighteen months for robbing his mistress in New York.

This was news neither to San Francisco nor, of course, Casey. For not only was it true, but several months before the editor had admitted it while a witness at a trial. He said then it was a minor trouble in which he took the lady's furniture when they broke up

housekeeping. He still believed, he testified, the furniture belonged to him because he had paid for it. The New York court, however, believed the woman had paid for it, too, even if not with money, and sent Casey to prison.

Casey, who had already faced down one of the brothers, marched to the *Bulletin* office. The scene between Editors Casey and James King was reported in the rival press:

Casey: What do you mean by such a statement?

King: Is it not the truth?

Casey: Yes, but I don't wish my past acts raked up; on that point I am sensitive. I was young and inexperienced when that happened, and as the evidence showed, it was, at the worst, but a case of constructive larceny.

King: I will publish what I see fit, and tomorrow I shall be even more severe.

Casey: Then you must be prepared to defend yourself on the street, for I intend to attack you on sight.

King: Leave my office at once. If you do not, I shall kick you into the street. Go and never darken my door again! (Sic)

Casey left and immediately went to friends and put his affairs in order.

With the urgent speed of tragedy, reports of the last phase of the quarrel were all over the streets. McGowan said in a book he later wrote to defend his actions that as he left his courtroom that afternoon shortly before five o'clock he found groups of people gathered on street corners. (Casey had left the *Bulletin* office less than an hour before.) There was an exhilarating thrill in the air of approaching combat.

McGowan, informed that Casey was seeking him, went to a bar-room in the rear of the City Hall, a block from the *Bulletin* office. There they talked, the keen, scheming judge and the gullible, angry editor. What they said can only be surmised, but McGowan reports in his book that Casey was angry beyond sound judgment or good sense.

"I am determined to fight," Casey said. "This has gone too far now."

"You must think this out," warned McGowan. "King announced only recently in his paper that he is going about armed."

"That is all right," said Casey. "I will give him a chance to draw. And you protect yourself, too, McGowan. I do not want you there when it happens. Remember there were claims that you wrote the Caliban card that started all this. If you are not there then there will be less chance of your being implicated."

If the judge promised not to be present, he had no intention of keeping it, for he wrote in his book: "Like almost all old Californians, I was accustomed to such sights, and, naturally enough, when I knew a fight was about to take place, curiosity prompted me to witness it."

He didn't see it, however, because he met a friend who suggested a drink, and that was something McGowan didn't often pass up. He was in a saloon talking to a suspended policeman about getting him reinstated when he saw the crowds running past and knew it had happened.

Casey had gone from McGowan and stood waiting at the corner of Montgomery and Washington Streets, a half block from the *Bulletin* office where James King of William lingered over his last edition. Small crowds stood furtively watching, trying to appear uninterested.

And as King stepped from his office at Merchant Street and started toward Washington Street, the crowd froze. King walked with his head down, as was his fashion when thinking. He noticed nothing unusual as he continued up the plank sidewalk along the Montgomery Block, opposite from where Casey was waiting.

King had almost reached the corner in front of the Bank Exchange saloon when Casey started across the street toward him. Both men were in the conventional black clothes of the period and wore talmas over their shoulders.

Casey suddenly stopped in the center of the street and called: "Draw and defend yourself!"

And without hesitation he threw off his talma and disclosed an already cocked pistol in his hand. He fired immediately.

King staggered. He stood there, his weakening legs apart, his head

still down, a tightening look of pain spreading slowly over his face. He had not attempted to draw his own pistol.

The slug from Casey's gun had entered King's left breast about an inch below the clavicle.

King, without looking up, groped his way into the nearby office of the Pacific Express Company. The groups from the corners began converging.

Inside the express office, King was placed in a chair and then on a mattress atop a desk. There was a great outpouring of blood.

By the time the first physician arrived, the crowd had become so great that its pressure broke a window of the office. There was excitement mounting in the mob, now beginning to fight for positions at the door. Friends had gathered around Casey, and McGowan soon caught up with the action. Someone took the gun from Casey's hand and by the time police had arrived it had disappeared for all time. As police escorted Casey to jail, a cry for doctors was being called about the streets.

Dr. R. K. Nuttall, a licentiate from the Royal College of Surgeons, Ireland, was called first. In an effort to stop the hemorrhage and ascertain the course of the bullet he put his unwashed fingers into the wound. He testified later this was a matter of expediency.

Other physicians, hearing the cries of the crowd, came into the office and at once began to bicker. Dr. R. Beverly Cole objected to anything being put into the wound except lint, and was overruled.

Another doctor, H. H. Toland, later testified that by the time he arrived "Twenty physicians were hovering about King, taking his pulse, administering stimulants and making numerous suggestions." He added that the crowd was so large that he had to fight his way in.

"The room," he said, "was rife with tobacco smoke."

Meanwhile, Casey had been placed in a cell next to Cora, the slayer of Marshal Richardson, still awaiting his second trial that had never come. Already Cora's keen ears could hear a mob gathering outside. He called through the cell bars: "Casey, you have sealed the fate of both of us!"

Casey's few friends were gathering to aid him; King's many

friends were gathering to destroy Casey. A cry had gone out that it was McGowan's gun that had been used, and groups began to look for the judge, who had already gone into hiding.

The doctors quarreled about the patient, now upstairs in a room of General H. W. Halleck's Montgomery Block, as the mob raged around the city jail. A majority of the physicians had decided to place a sponge in the editor's wound. Dr. Cole said later this sponge was the size of a goose egg—too big for the wound—that it was dipped in ordinary water and shoved with considerable pressure into the wound and wet compresses and bandages applied.

Hourly bulletins were issued as the *Evening Bulletin's* editor went slowly to his death.

The crowd had grown to many thousands around the jail by darkness, and the sheriff called upon Governor J. Neeley Johnson to come from Sacramento "to look into a situation now out of control." He arrived, weighed political significances, and did nothing, although after it was too late he declared the city in a state of insurrection.

Casey was still in the hands of his friends, but the mob outside the jail was the wildest it had ever been. After darkness set in, it was decided the county jail at Broadway and Kearny was safer for the prisoner. Came the question of how to make the transfer.

It was decided that a bold stroke was best. A carriage with fast horses was brought to the jail door, and at the sight of it the mob went mad and rushed forward. It had been timed well, however, and before it had stopped, Casey, surrounded by his political friends, jumped from the door into the carriage. Although a prisoner, he was armed with a pistol, and as the horses danced to get through the crowd, Casey stood up on the seat swinging his pistol from side to side. The race was won, and Casey went safely into the county jail. The McGowan gang, however, had not reckoned on the Committee of Vigilance, inactive since 1851.

The shooting of James King of William was on May 14, 1856. By the eighteenth of the month, the Vigilantes were reorganized, were again in military companies, again armed with rifles. They now took over a grain warehouse before which they piled sacks of sand to fortify its front. It was named Fort Gunnybags. On this fourth day after the shooting, with King still fighting for his life, the fort's bells

began to toll, and within an hour 2,600 members of the Vigilante Committee, divided into twenty-six companies, with bayonets set, marched up Sacramento Street. There was not a sound except that of marching feet and brief commands of the officers. The city's small police force again, as in 1851, stood by, helpless.

Before the county jail a hollow square, ten men deep, was formed facing the building. Cannon were planted. A delegation of officers went into the prison and demanded Casey and Cora. The sheriff handed them over after a short argument, and the parade reversed itself back to Fort Gunnybags.

Governor Johnson, now awake to the organized threat to authority, appointed Banker William Tecumseh Sherman a major general of Militia and asked him to quell the trouble. A small group, known as the Law and Order Party, had been organized to oppose the Vigilantes by Sheriff David Scannell, and this was offered to Sherman.

The General, always a careful officer, looked the situation over with a critical eye—and refused the Governor's request.

This early strategic retreat did not satisfy Thomas King, now editing the *Bulletin* while his brother was dying. He struck hard at the man who shortly would be one of the nation's great generals:

"Queries for General William T. Sherman, the avowed advocate of the Law and Order Party: Was not the sum of \$35,000, more or less, placed to the credit of Casey in your bank within three weeks? Were you not aware that the sum was made up by gambling and other vile interests, and deposited for the defense of Casey?"

The General issued no communique, but later he sent a report to his banking partners in St. Louis:

"I found only 100 men with Sheriff Scannell. All the Militia had gone over to the Vigilante Committee. I told the Governor the jail could not be defended."

To his father-in-law, he wrote: "I really could find no fault with the Vigilante Committee and those obeying it, except that they were showing an enmity to the free expression of opinion that looks like other similar events in history. I estimated the number of marchers at 2,500 and at least between 5,000 and 10,000 awaiting within rifle shot of the jail. Telegraph Hill was black with them."

Governor Johnson requested Federal troops and was refused.

Billy Mulligan and Yankee Sullivan were captured by the committee and charged with being accessories before the act. Sullivan's trick ballot box was unearthed and displayed in front of the Oriental Hotel, where 15,000 passed before it in one day. Judge McGowan could not be found and horsemen were dashing through the streets tracing wild rumors of his hideout.

Then, on May 20, King died.

The mob that had grown and dwindled and grown again on the tide of bulletins from the editor's bedside now clogged the streets for blocks near Fort Gunnybags. Church and fire bells began tolling and continued their exciting chant throughout the day. Business was suspended. There were rushes on drygoods stores for mourning crepe to bind around thousands of arms.

As 10,000 marched with the body of James King of William to the Lone Mountain cemetery, the Vigilantes tried Casey and Cora. The verdicts came quickly. Death by hanging.

After the King burial, the thousands returned and stood quietly before Fort Gunnybags.

Said the *Wide West* magazine in a special Pictorial Edition:

"To the fort's left and behind it, the hills grew blacker every moment with increasing numbers of spectators. On its right, as far as the eye could reach, serried masses of men blocked up in every street and lane leading to the scene of the expected action.

"Here were seen the glittering bayonets and the tramp of armed men was heard. To the left of the cannon was stationed the company of Frenchmen, among whom are said to have been men who had followed the lead of Napoleon in days gone by at the Battle of the Pyramids. There was also a German company present."

Cora, told of the verdict, made one request—that Belle Cora, his paramour, be brought to his cell. There they were married as the vicious murmur of the mob swelled up to mingle with the padre's words. A few minutes later he stepped out on the platform with Casey where ropes dangled above.

Cora stood sullenly silent, but Casey, a noose already around his neck, asked to speak to the great crowd below:

"Gentlemen: I hope this will be forever engraved on your minds and hearts. I am no murderer. Let no man call me a murderer or an

assassin. Let not the community pronounce me a murderer. Let no editor dare to slander my name or memory. Where I belonged I was taught to fight, and that to resist my own wrong was my province."

The bells of the fire houses took up the dirge as Casey and Cora fell to the ends of the ropes and strangled to death.

That night the city was silent and the streets cleared for the first time in ten days.

Within a few days, McGowan still missing, Mulligan, Sullivan and others were tried by the Vigilantes and found guilty of being "disturbers of the public peace for many years and leaders of an organized band of ballot stuffers." They were ordered deported with a warning of death if they returned.

The delay in finding a ship that would take the McGowan henchmen away worried Yankee Sullivan. He told his jailer that the roar of the crowd was still in his ears, that his deportation order was false, that the mob would return for him. One night he broke a bottle and opened an artery with it. He was dead when they found him in the morning. McCowan was still being hunted. He hid for days in rooms of friends while the mobs were before the jail and a price was posted on him. As one hiding place after another was discovered, he was able to slip away a few minutes before the hounds.

"One night," he wrote in his book, "my face, hair and mustache blacked with pomatum and shoe-blacking, my stomach drawn in and confined in a pair of French stays, and over my clothes an over-coat with a derringer in each pocket, I ventured boldly into the streets. . . .

"My slouched hat was over my eyes and there was an extra pair of derringers in my pantaloons pockets, together with a six-shooter and knife in my belt. I walked boldly out Kearny Street (then the main street) and, as I went, found many fearful reminders of my peril, in tramping hoofs and clashing sabers. An unjustly outlawed man, through the hosts of my enemies."

He got into the country, was betrayed a dozen times by people he thought were his friends, but broke from posses as they closed in. Once he rolled up in the floor rug of a filthy Mexican hut as searchers looked in the windows—and found himself in a nest of thousands of ardent California fleas.

Finally, the fires of hatred having been wetted down by time and politics, a bill went through the Legislature to give McGowan a change of venue. He was tried at Napa and there, in February of 1857, the sponge that had gone into the wound of James King of William was argued again.

The good doctors testified in all directions, but mostly against each other. Several said, most definitely, that the presence of the unclean sponge in the wound induced the fatal phlebitis and not, necessarily, the bullet. This led the *State Journal* of Sacramento to burst forth with one of the first huge eight-column headlines:

JAMES CASEY INNOCENT OF MURDER. DEATH OF JAMES KING CAUSED BY DOCTORS!

The jury came back with a verdict of not guilty after being out just ten minutes. Judge McGowan could again be ubiquitous. But his day was done. He had long been ousted from office. He was broke. He wandered away. According to J. F. Bourke, veteran newspaperman, McGowan became a secret agent for the Confederacy. Thirty-three years after the James King of William affair he returned to San Francisco. He was standing on a curb one day talking with Bourke when William T. Coleman, who had been president of the Vigilantes, came along. The two, now elderly, shook hands. Later Coleman sought out Bourke, discovered as he suspected that McGowan was ill and broke. Coleman sent his own physician to care for McGowan, placed him in a good hotel, paid all his bills and took complete care of him for two years until the old judge died.



## CHAPTER VIII

# The *Alta* Moves Right

TOM KING, who got the *Bulletin* when his brother was murdered, turned out to be as choleric as James. He whipped up the Vigilante movement whenever it began to droop, which was often now. His suggestion, accompanied by excellent ballyhoo, that city officials resign in a body and let the voters have another go at them, resulted one night in a rally that blocked Montgomery Street for a quarter of a mile. Into it a gang of rowdies charged, and Vigilantes countercharged. The big fight accomplished nothing but blackened eyes and broken heads—but it gave the first intimation that the Vigilante Committee was not now supreme.

However, later, the Vigilantes bagged two thieves, Joseph Hetherington and Philander Brace, and after a brief trial dropped them off a platform on the ends of ropes. Both died miserably and their grotesque writhings and turnings and the shouts of the mob stamped

a team of horses. The runaways headed into the crowd, causing a panic in which the usual women fainted and the customary children were trampled. Complaint about the Vigilantes' unwarranted violence began to mount.

Finally, David Terry, Chief Justice of the California Supreme Court, one of the most famous of the state's robust characters, broke the back of the movement. He did it without direct intention. At the height of the Vigilante popularity, Justice Terry knifed a committeeman and found himself in a dirty cell just like a shabby fellow. The Vigilantes had made the arrest, and it was up to them to follow through, if they dared, for Terry was the most powerful political figure in the state. He stayed in jail for a few weeks—then suddenly was free. The *Bulletin* screamed:

"This is the judge whose decisions are made in the heat of street fights and executed by himself on the instant with his bowie knife or pistol. This is the judge who stabbed a witness in open court because he did not testify to suit His Honor."

The next day Tom King said what he meant: "The Committee members have checked the reform movement, perhaps killed it. They have infused a new spirit into the rowdies. They no longer represent the feelings of the community."

President Coleman of the Vigilantes tried his best to explain. Terry *had* been tried and convicted of "resistance to and assault upon officers of the committee, but because the wound did not prove fatal, and the usual punishment in the power of the Vigilantes to inflict was not applicable, it was finally decided to discharge him." In other words, because the committee had no permanent jails it could only execute or exile. The Vigilantes, Coleman inferred, did not feel either punishment fitted the crime.

Judge Terry wrapped his great talma around him, set his wide-brimmed fedora at the proper angle, bowed calmly to his jailers as they held the door open for his exit. At the prison door a group of women presented him with an inscribed silver pitcher and the Young Men's Democratic Club greeted him with prolonged cheers, took him upon their shoulders and carried him down to a special boat waiting to carry him to the state capital.

As he stepped aboard the boat, the United States sloop-of-war

*John Adams* fired a salute of all its guns! That gesture brought forth the hoots of every editor in town--and an investigation order from Washington, D. C., that just stopped short of a general court-martial for the cutter's Commander, E. B. Boutwell. In the pages of messages, charges, countercharges, explanations, denials and incriminations unearthed by the inquiry, it was disclosed that Governor J. Neeley Johnson, intimate political friend of Terry, had originally demanded that Commander Boutwell use his gunboat to force the Vigilantes to release the judge. The Commander replied in well-preserved documented writing:

"Civil war is to be avoided and interference by me would bring such on. I could destroy the city of San Francisco with the guns of the *John Adams*, but, in the ruins, friends as well as others would suffer. If I demand Judge Terry's release and they fail to give him up I must either batter down the town or render myself ridiculous in the eyes of the world, which is not consonant with my present feeling."

Captain D. G. Farragut, then commandant of Mare Island Navy Yard and Boutwell's superior, in an official letter to Secretary of the Navy Dobbin, was angry about the foolish salute but turned the blame on Governor Johnson: "That the Governor has acted unwisely from the beginning there is scarcely a doubt, as he had neither arms, ammunition nor supplies."

The Committee of Vigilance, announcing the city was again free of major crimes and criminals, disbanded, in August, 1857.

Now the quieted city began to look about to see what damage had been done. Besides hanging a few bad people, the Committee of Vigilance had killed one good newspaper. Before the citizen army took over the city there had been three major journals. The *Bulletin* was climbing the ladder of success, the *Herald* was sitting gaily on the top rung, and the *Alta California* was holding on weakly to the bottom steps. When the violence ended, the *Herald* was mortally hurt after a beating administered by the Vigilantes, and the dying *Alta* had regained its health in a hurry.

To explain this sudden turnover, one must go back a few years. The *Alta California*'s fortunes had been strictly precarious almost from its founding. Its editor, Edward Gilbert, had been its one bril-

liant figure that kept it from the morass of the commonplace. When he was killed, Edward Kemble, the founder who had a suffering mother's interest in the *Alta*, tried to take over again, but he was fumbling and sad now that Gilbert, his idol, had actually gone to clay. A. C. Russell, a serious little fellow who had recently exchanged formal but inaccurate shots with an army officer and an ex-Governor, bought Gilbert's shares. C. A. Washburn, an experienced newsman and also a duelist, took over the editorial writing.

The trio, however, were not as lively as their case histories when it came to operating a newspaper. They were serious men, old-fashioned, with very stiff collars. Sometimes in their *Alta* 2,500-word articles appeared without as much as a sub-head to lighten the type-spread. They also blundered stolidly into the city's first wage dispute with the printers.

In 1852, the publishers held a formal convention, the first of its kind in the West. They met for five days. It was the forerunner of the usual convention of today with dinners, theater parties and two steamboat rides on the bay. Some time in between these conventionalities, there was a business session and a few intra-mural agreements were signed. Delegates harmonized on certain terms: that subscription rates would be determined by circulation and that advertising rates, also set by circulation, would be announced and adhered to. Under no circumstances would there be secret rates. A most definite agreement was reached and signed that all would stick together on a demand for a lower wage scale for printers.

The *Alta California* editors, hardly waiting to take their gold badges from their lapels, carried out the last agreement first. They asked the back-room boys to take less than the current \$2 per 1,000 ems. To this the printers made the usual curt noises. The *Alta* rolled its eyes toward the brethren who had been so wordy and helpful on the convention floor. All of them had suddenly been inflicted with a subtle case of amnesia and were also hard of hearing. The *Alta* treasury, however, was not bursting its seams and its trusting editors were hopeful that the comrades at the convention had meant what they said about fraternity. So one day they walked into the composing room and gave to each and every printer what is now termed the old heave-ho.

As the printers rolled up their aprons, put away their chewing tobacco and walked out, eighteen imported typesetters slipped in by way of the back door. They had been brought all the way from New York City by steamer and to the shame of the union's agents had not been discovered. In those days strikebreakers were "rats," not "scabs" or "finks" as today, but under any name they were just a white fury to the ousted men. The sluggings were murderous.

Three things were accomplished by the *Alta*'s lockout: first, the strong Eureka Typographical Union was formed in *all* the shops; second, the "rats" left the *Alta* and joined the new union as they were released from hospitals; third, the *Alta*, deserted by the other publishers, lost the strike.

The skinny little *Post* was the first to have a lapse of memory on the agreement not to cheat on undercutting of advertisement rates. The best advertisers in the city were the auctioneers, who had for years been carting off their profits to the banks in gunnysacks. The city had burned to small, worthless piles of ash many times and there were no warehouses. Yet ships continued to pile goods on the shore. It had to be auctioned in a hurry. Now the *Post*'s manager slipped his slim body through the back door of the auctioneers' headquarters and suggested a quiet deal by which all the advertisements were to go to the *Post*—at a special, rock-bottom rate. The auctioneers saw a future in this idea. They at once offered it to *all* newspapers, asking for bids; an exclusive contract to go to the newspaper offering the lowest rate. The *Herald* snagged the business.

Said the *Evening Picayune*: "That combination very suddenly dropped apart. The knights of the quill with the impudence and independence generally passed to their credit, have come under the knights of the hammer—and, in the printing offices of San Francisco, 'Chaos has come again.' "

It was more than chaos for the *Alta*. Its divvy of the auctioneers' business was gone. From now on it and the other unsuccessful bidders would get only what the auctioneers cared to hand out on special occasions. Bill collectors swarmed about the *Alta* doorway on Steamer Days and editors no longer had that fearless, forthright vision so touted in their editorials. They began to bring their lunches to the office and to worry about the cost of the children's next pair

of shoes. The circulation was down so low that it matched the editor's blood count. And into this evil silence entered the heavy sound of the feet of Sheriff W. R. Gorman, who had a bunch of legal papers grasped in his big paw. He announced without much waste of eloquence or gestures that they were eleven executions issued against the *Alta California* by the courts. He asked, rather unnecessarily, that the newspaper bend over with its neck resting on the block. He swung his ax, and the carcass of *Alta* brought \$13,500.

The buyers were its editorial writer, Washburn, and some of the victorious printers. But within a few months, the sheriff's hefty hand was plastering notices all over the place again. Now his hammer was banged down for \$11,000. The *Alta* was ill and losing ground. Historian Hittell, who was in the business at the time, said there was only one man on the staff who might be considered a reporter. That was R. B. Monks, who did his reporting on his off time, for he was a regular city policeman.

No matter how many were editors and how few reporters, the "Mother of the Dailies" just couldn't get going. Failure had become a habit. In October of 1855 when it again went under the worn hammer, George K. Fitch got it for \$8,000. (In June of 1851, when there was a fire in the *Alta* building, the newspaper had been valued at \$60,000 by its rivals' reports.)

Fitch, who was later to become one of the great newspaper operators of San Francisco, was not much of a publisher now. On the day he bought the *Alta California*, James King of William had issued his first edition of the *Bulletin*, and the immediate success of the new non-conformist must have dispirited the conservative Fitch. Loring Pickering was already a partner of Fitch, but he, too, didn't seem to be thrilled about having anything to do with the pale and wan *Alta*. Six months later, Fitch and Pickering took a \$2,000 profit in its sale to businessman R. Cutler Moore, dusted off their hands and smiled as they walked away.

Moore, therefore, had the *Alta* when the Vigilantes took over control of the city's thoughts in 1856. He was only one of many editors wondering which way to jump. The Vigilantes were led by prominent businessmen, advertisers, no less. Only John Nugent,

editor of the *Herald*, stood upon his feet and held up his fists. He wrote an editorial soon after Casey shot King, when the emotional frenzy was at its height, saying there could be, understandably, two sides to any political gun play. The next day a paid notice appeared in every newspaper in San Francisco except the *Herald*:

To the Auctioneers of San Francisco:

Gentlemen: As the undersigned, importers, commission merchants, and jobbers in this city, will not subscribe to the San Francisco *Herald* after this date, they respectfully request you to advertise your sales in some other of the city papers.

Two hundred and fifteen merchants signed this notice, and the Procrustean had spoken. The boycott was effective. The *Herald* was practically without revenue overnight. Nugent pulled in his belt, reduced his newspaper to half size. One day it was the largest San Francisco newspaper, the next it was the smallest.

Nugent had courage. He fought back editorially, but what clamor have words against the silence of the cash-drawer bell? He quietly reported his newspaper's deathbed scenes. He told of crowds milling purposefully around his office door, awaiting his editions. He recorded without spleen that when his paper went on the street, the crowds gathered them and made bonfires. "This was done," he wrote, "amid great rejoicing."

"Two hundred and twelve persons yesterday withdrew their subscriptions," he added. "We now appeal to the citizens of San Francisco and the state whether or not they are willing that all freedom of speech should be crushed in this city. We have exercised the vocation of newspaper editor in San Francisco for the past six years, and we have never yet been controlled. At this late date we fear that it would be useless for us to attempt to submit to dictation. If the sacred position of public journalist is to be degraded by compulsory subservience to the behests of a babel, we confess we have not stomach for the office."

Operation of a newspaper is a dangerous financial endeavor, and it lives on its stomach. If not fed regularly with huge bales of currency it dies in greatest agony. And so, the *Herald*, being run by

common men whose wealth lay mostly in their courage, faded away proudly, giving ground fiercely and whimpering not at all from its deathbed.

The *Alta California* editors were honorable men and brave when it came to physical encounter, but when advertisers were concerned—that, then, called for caution. They sat down the second day after the shooting of James King of William in chaste and dignified confusion. Two Vigilante editorials had been prepared. One said the Vigilantes were right in preparing to take over the city government; the other said maybe. Then the editor sat and stared at them.

Frederick MacCrellish, who might be called the financial editor since he reported the daily grocery prices, came in off his beat. That mobs were milling around the jail was not particularly important to an ambitious young clerk bent on getting the day's listings on beans, potatoes and flour into his paper. He carefully placed his talma over the wall peg and was passing in to his desk when he looked upon the editors frozen in indecisive gloom around a table. He stopped long enough to inquire the cause.

"Oh," he said, "the men I deal with, the ones who count in this city—the merchants, I mean—believe to a man the Vigilantes are right."

There was power to this quiet remark. The editors took a vote. It was unanimous for the Pro-Vigilante editorial. The merchants, particularly, and the auctioneers, more importantly, liked that editorial. The *Alta* was given the *Herald's* auction business. A chance remark had turned the balance of power in favor of the granny *Alta*. It was saved for another thirty-five years.

And it is truly poetic justice that the grocery-list clerk, who by his timely, cogent opinion, had lifted both feet of his newspaper off the edge of a slippery grave, would, in time, become chief editor and part owner of the *Alta California*.

## CHAPTER IX

# Tom King Fights It Out

EDITOR Tom King conceded in the *Bulletin's* first anniversary edition that San Francisco's morals had shown improvement by recalling what they had been a year before:

"The condition of San Francisco was truly deplorable, and cut-throats, assassins, gamblers and corrupt politicians controlled the reins of the government. Corrupt judges sat on the bench; the ermine was soiled by filthy lucre. The decisions of many of our courts were merchantable articles, sold to the highest bidder. The ballot box was in possession of felons and the most infamous characters. Murders and assassinations were committed on our streets in the broad light of day, and the murderers fled to the arms of the law for protection as readily as a child to the embrace of its mother. None but the penniless or innocent were convicted."

He added, as something of an afterthought, that his *Bulletin* was

improving also. Forty printers were now employed, besides twenty-one city carriers and ninety-three country agents. Expenses were from \$2,000 to \$2,300 per week. The circulation of the daily was 6,500 and the weekly had 10,000, the largest in the state.

In the editorial, King also pointed up the good qualities of the People's Party ticket, which had helped him. This was a group that had sworn to clean up the city. An election date had been set, ballots printed, torchlight parades and street rallies held—but Governor Johnson, who still had a mad on about his treatment by the Vigilantes, had refused to declare the state of emergency over, an act needed to clear the way for official voting. On the eve of the election, November 3, 1856, the Governor, with considerable bad grace, gave in and declared the "insurrection" ended.

Election day was celebrated by several good street riots. There was much drinking and as the day wore on rival voters were punching each other all over the streets. In the old Ninth Ward there was a slugging match in which thirty roughs became casualties worthy of hospitalization. A few pick handles added to the ruggedness of the affair, the cause of which no one seemed to know. It had started between two strangers, and others got into the spirit of the thing as police stood around judiciously helpless.

The Twelfth Ward had something special. In the midst of a splendid catch-as-catch-can and swing-your-partner-by-his-throat battle royal, former Vigilante cavalrymen put in a picturesque appearance. Most of the horsemen rode beautifully groomed blacks. They drew up in company front formation, jockeyed for position and then charged. The sides of sabers smacked down upon shoulders and necks and the fight broke up in something of a hurry, the battlers making off through the side alleys.

The People's Party won with a scant margin. The total vote was 12,152.

While the city election was a great victory for the *Bulletin*, the national election, held at the same time, was to be a fine success for the *Alta*, too. For it was smartly scheming to put over the happiest scoop of the day. San Francisco went Republican in the 1856 election. But what about the rest of the nation? There was, of course, no telegraph, no Pony Express. The word must come by steamer.

At last the steamer *Golden Age* was sighted beyond the Gate, and the semaphore atop Telegraph Hill (named for this signal) informed the city below that the ship had come. Reporters rushed to their sailboats to board the ship and bring back the news.

The *Golden Age* dropped anchor in the stream at exactly 8:30 P.M. By 9 P.M., the *Alta California* had an extra on the street, telling of Buchanan's election! This is as fast as a modern newspaper plant.

The ambitious *Bulletin* screamed fake and its face was crimson later when the word got out how the *Alta* had done it. Editor Kemble had sent a smart printer to Acapulco where the steamers in those days stopped for water and supplies. There the printer went aboard, got the news, set the entire story, sealed down his form and packed and padded it well.

When the telegraph spoke from the Hill, the *Alta* pressmen fired up the paper's steam engine and fly-boys were called in and got set. A small boat ran alongside the ship just outside the Golden Gate; the printer handed down on a rope his packed form. The small boat took the wind and scudded ahead of the steamer through the Gate to the wharf where a horse awaited patiently in the shafts of a buggy. There was a wild ride for the *Alta* office. Steam went into the cylinders, the wheels turned and the first real extra came to San Francisco. It was a sensation.

King's consistent fights, however, soon overcame the bad effects of the rival's scoop. He was striking out viciously and grimly at times and, of course, winning the usual enemies, each one sitting in his cave sniffing hopefully against the wind for the first scent of decay. James M. Estell, State Assemblyman, who had a contract to feed and clothe the San Quentin prisoners for \$10,000 a month, had sub-let the job for \$5,000 a month. Now King roared:

"Prisoners are half starved, half naked and eaten alive by vermin. We presume that if we employ rogues we must expect to be robbed and swindled." He added that the structure of the prison was in such condition that a prisoner (if ever given a full meal) could break out by leaning against the wall. The strongest thing about the prison, he said, was the gall of Estell in taking money from the state.

Estell read this and arose in the Legislature and asked for special privilege, which permitted an Assemblyman to say nasty, libelous

words with official immunity. He wished, he said, to make a few remarks about the private life of Thomas King, editor. Did the Legislators know that King was divorced? Would they like to know why? It was because he was "physically impure." Then he went into the interesting reading:

"And when his wife found out, he deserted her. She, left alone, became a prostitute. Meanwhile, he had gone away to the Mexican War. When he came back he found his wife presiding over a brothel. Did he kill her? No, he did not! He asked if he tried for awhile to get some business for the place would he get a divvy. In this way, in fact, did Thomas King get money to pay his passage to California."

King printed every word that Estell said, including the part about the physical impurity. It was a sensation even in that informal day. General William T. Sherman, under whom King had served at Fort Laramie, came to his defense with a statement of good conduct. Clergymen offered sermons in the editor's behalf.

King did not editorialize. His investigators were working quietly in Missouri where Estell had lived. They disclosed—and King printed—that Estell had killed his man and not in a duel, but with a heavy stick. Estell had been tried and acquitted, the decision coming through perjured testimony, said King. Upon this, King filed an affidavit claiming the Legislator had taken two Negro boys from San Quentin and sent them to New Orleans to be sold back into slavery. He intimated Estell had helped convicts to escape from the penitentiary. By the time he was through, Estell was in political eclipse—and just staying out of his own prison.

Now Fred Cohen, still strutting as the protector of Brother Alf, suddenly announced he would do more hereafter than break the windows of the *Bulletin* office. King had carried on his own brother's feud with Alfred about that missing \$600,000 of the Adams' Bank funds, and Fred said one day he was going to run the editor out of town. Tom King armed himself with two derringers, one on his hip, the other, gangster-fashion, in a shoulder holster.

Thus armed, King passed Fred Cohen one night and each gave the other the wary eye and moved on. But Cohen swung suddenly after passing and brought his cane down solidly on the back of King's



head. Tom staggered into the street, groggy, blind with pain, trying in his daze to get his heavy coat open so he could secure the pistol under his armpit. While he worked at his coat, Cohen kept banging him over the head with his cane.

Finally, King, kneeling in the dirt, still dizzy, got his derringer free and let go with it, and the slug clipped Cohen under the chin, miraculously only drawing blood. Then they grappled like clumsy wrestlers and fell in a writhing heap in the street. The average curb crowd gathered to watch languidly and make smart remarks. It was bloody and dirty, and undoubtedly each appreciated it when a wandering policeman appeared and used his night stick on both of them.

At the police station both talked at once and demanded rights, including that of swearing out warrants for assault and battery. The desk sergeant accommodated both, and so they posted bail and left the jail and made definitely different turns as they came to the street. Cohen finally paid a fine of \$60.

The editor next held a record of being challenged twice over one insult. In 1857, Joseph C. Duncan, editor of the *Globe*, was upset when he opened the rival *Bulletin* and saw that he had been raised to the eminence of a "swindler." It was a rather mild remark for the times, between editors, that is. But Duncan called upon a friend, serious-faced J. H. Merryman, captain of a revenue cutter, to carry the challenge.

Merryman, dressed in his highest collar and well-brushed alpaca, carried the message to King, only to find himself being received by a civilian with a sarcastic smile. He was told he was something of a fool to be wasting his time on such trivia. The startled Merryman went away, after uttering some expressions of surprise at the difficult humor of the modern generation. But the next day he almost rocked himself off his chair when he looked at Page Two of the *Bulletin*. His principal was referred to as Don Quixote, and there was an account, most unflattering, of the whole affair. Now Captain Merryman had been deeply and irrevocably hurt in his dignity. He therefore made a second trip to King, this time carrying his own challenge by direct delivery. The editor, where he had previously smiled, roared with unrefined laughter. As the sturdy behind of

Merryman disappeared sternly out the door, King sat down and wrote a second editorial referring to Merryman as "the second edition of Don Quixote."

So Thomas had his fun. He made some money and pleased his vanity and built his paper—and what more can a publisher wish? Then, in the issue of January 17, 1859, he suddenly wrote his good-bye:

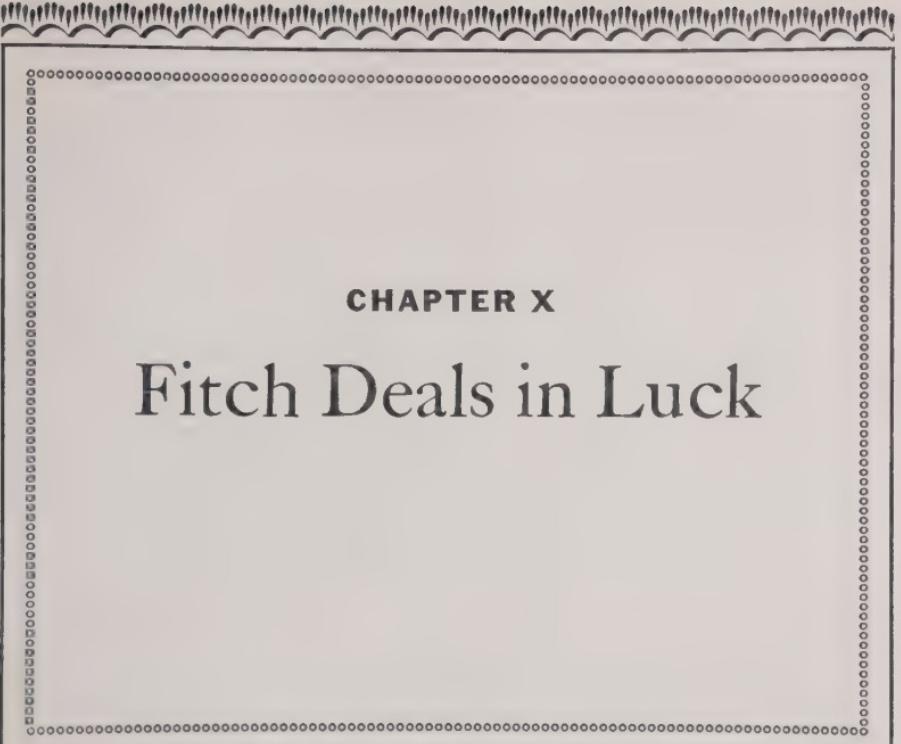
"If at times in giving vent to honest indignation, or in exposing public wrongs, I have not been so choice in my language, the reader will bear in mind that I had not learned this business of journalism as a profession, and that the temper of the times would not admit of delay in searching for jingling words and honeyed expressions.

"If a surgeon would skillfully amputate a limb he must not let the anticipated pain of his patient operate too much on his sympathy. Facts and honest opinion were alike told in plain, homely English, without any mincing and in a manner that no one could mistake. All the great objects for which the *Bulletin* was originally started have been gained. Public peculation has stopped. Our municipal government is now in the hands of men of principle. It is only necessary for the people to be true to themselves and select businessmen and not politicians and place-beggars for every public position."

He could be forgiven a little fling at other editors, most of whom were wondering just how the newsprint bill was to be paid: "On retiring from the *Bulletin*, I leave it pecuniarily in a most prosperous condition."

He announced that C. O. Gerberding was now sole owner.

King went back to Georgetown, D. C. He was following the footsteps of so many active men who retire too early. Just what he took out of the *Bulletin* is not known, but word came later that he had dropped a small fortune in the flop of the market when the Civil War broke. He went to work for the *Buffalo Courier*. In 1874 he was elected justice of the peace, holding the job for a quarter of a century. He died April 10, 1911, at the age of 87.



## CHAPTER X

# Fitch Deals in Luck

FOR two months, C. O. Gerberding struggled along with his growing child, hoping it would not turn on him too soon and lay him out. King had fought with every editor in town and Gerberding carried on this tradition at least enough not to want any of them in charge of his newspaper. At this time, James W. Simonton came into the city from Washington, D. C., where he had been the *New York Times* correspondent. He had three distinctions: experience, no ties with any local newspaper and a few hundred dollars. He was looking for a place in which to sink his dollars. Gerberding said yes.

He fitted in very well at once, for he opened his career by calling the editor of the *News* a thief—and being able to prove it. The *News* editor accepted his accusation of stealing the Eastern market dispatches with honorable calmness and said hereafter he would be

pleased to give credit when he stole. From then on the *News* printed under its pilfered stock reports: "These listings have been clipped from a contemporary."

Arrest of an editor at any time is amazing enough, particularly on a misdemeanor. Police definitely dislike collaring publishers because newspaper owners are more easily angered than most persons. Yet, in May of 1859, a policeman sauntered into the *Bulletin* office—near deadline, of course—and tapped the shoulders of the dignified Simonton and the staid Gerberding.

"The law wants you," we can presume the policeman said in the language of the day. "I have warrants for both of you gentlemen."

To the stunned but questioning gape of both, the officer added, "The cause, gentlemen, is publishing and selling a lewd and obscene newspaper, which it says right here on this thing the judge give me to serve."

And that was what had happened to the newspaper which at the moment was gallantly holding the position of second dullest in the city. (The *Alta's* right to first place was never questioned from its founding to death.) Now the *Bulletin* had not only been declared lewd but its owners had been arrested for it.

Austin B. Parks had signed the warrant. He claimed that the *Bulletin* had disturbed his sense of decency by printing the confession of Mrs. Sickles. The Sickles trial was the Thaw Case of its day. Even Far-Western papers often printed about two columns of testimony in small type, when available.

Mr. Sickles, a noted Washington, D. C., architect, had found his wife with the trusted family friend, a Mr. Key, society fop—and bang went the pistol. Mr. Key had been put away for keeps, and Mr. Sickles was up for murder. As is usual with whimsical women, Mrs. Sickles told all. This all was what the *Bulletin* published along with countless thousands of words of other testimony. The thrilling morsel to which Complainant Parks objected was contained in the paragraph in which the erring wife related the affair of the empty house and the non-empty bed. Said Mrs. Sickles from the witness chair where she sat amidst her rolling tears: "I have done there what is usual for a wicked woman to do."

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This was lewdness, said Mr. Parks, whose identity the *Bulletin* staff could not learn for some days. In telling of the arrest of its owners, the newspaper said, "No one seems to know who this Parks is. Probably he is some poor wretch employed to swear to the affidavit."

At the preliminary hearing Parks did not put in an appearance, and to this the *Bulletin* pointed with pious glee. Then, at the next hearing, Parks showed up. The man who had been so offended at a few mild, if significant, words, was a faro capper, and also, said the *Bulletin*, "A used-up old man."

The court hearing was a roaring affair with everything except gun play. The other newspapers maintained discreet and careful silence. The *Bulletin* called upon the gods to witness the infamy of the trial. The judge, it intimated, was a tool of the paper's political enemies. Undoubtedly some sinister person was behind the rummy Mr. Parks. At least one hundred other papers in the country had printed the same dispatch without court action.

The judge listened and read the confession of Mrs. Sickles over and over again. Then he frowned most learnedly and fined both Simonton and Gerberding \$100 cash each. They refused to pay, announcing an appeal onward and upward even unto the Supreme Court of the United States of America. History is silent on the disposition of this important action.

Simonton, seriously educated in the old school of spats-and-cane journalism, was not equal to this rough and tumble newspapering of the Wild West. In a couple of months he had split his one-half interest with the great George K. Fitch and gone to New York to become Associated Press manager there. Fitch, who was to dominate the *Bulletin* for the next forty years, had been in the newspaper business all his working years.

He was one of those Horatio Alger young men who at seventeen read Ben Franklin's autobiography and at once irrevocably decided to be a printer-journalist. In 1843, therefore, he became an apprentice under an agreement that called for \$25 a year—and found. Later when he became a full-fledged printer he was able to save \$10 a week out of his weekly salary of \$15. In two years he had an in-

terest in a print shop which he sold for the price of a ticket to California. While awaiting a ship at Panama he published a newspaper for the idle passengers, making a handy \$150 before he climbed into the steerage.

The canny youth found San Francisco had already started on its bewildering decade in which, by the time it had 78,000 population, 130 newspapers would insist upon their democratic privilege of going broke. In this period of the ever-hopeful editor, every newspaper in San Francisco had on its masthead an invisible symbol—the shoestring. Even thirty-six foreign-language journals started with all the arrogance of amateurs. Nineteen of them were French, nine German, two Italian, one Jewish, two Chinese and three Spanish. Most of their shops were just back-room spots big enough for a wandering printer to hang up his hat and put a pocketful of type on the stone.

Fitch took a small press he had freighted out and went to Sacramento and started the *Transcript*, April 1, 1850. He was grossing between three and four thousand dollars a month when cholera struck. In the midst of this epidemic, with the death rate reaching forty a day, came squatters' riots. They were bloody. As the desperate battles between the sheriff and his men and the dispossessed ran through the tiny river town, dead were left sprawled in the dust. Between the riots and the cholera the population dropped two-thirds.

"Our cemeteries," wrote Fitch, "look like newly ploughed fields."

Loring Pickering already had the *Times* in Sacramento and now Fitch proposed consolidation. The new paper was known as the *Times & Transcript* and started a lifelong partnership. In 1852, when the cholera was gone and business was on the mend, Vincent E. Geiger and Benjamin F. Washington started the *State Journal*. The town could not stand that much journalism. Fitch struck out angrily at the "interlopers," calling Geiger a "sponger." Geiger met Fitch later in the corridor of the Capitol and took a wide swing at him. Fitch returned the blow and they rocked around together, clinching and blowing and doing fancy footwork. They were pulled apart and each went his way muttering dreadful vengeance.

The next day Fitch wrote Geiger, explaining Sacramento was too small to hold both of them and proposing that one of them leave



town. He gave the choice to his opponent, who elected to stay. So Fitch and Pickering took their paper to San Francisco, along with a negotiated farewell gift of \$3,000 from the *Journal*.

The democratic *Times & Transcript* got into San Francisco just in time to find its political party split wide open: Southern- and Northern-Democrat. Fitch went Northern. Then President Pierce got into office, and threw his favors to the Southern-Democrats. That caused the *Times & Transcript* to lose face, which, with a newspaper, is also circulation.

The Southern party grew as the political favors were poured into its lap and soon the Southern-Democratic registration was two to one in California. Fitch and Pickering had a lemon on their hands.

Geiger and Washington, up in Sacramento, had gone for the South and money was rolling in. At the first Southern party caucus, it was decided to take the nasty little *Times & Transcript* out of the field, since it would be a nuisance in the coming state elections. With a bagful of Democratic money, Geiger came down to San Francisco and offered \$30,000 for the paper—the same *Times & Transcript*, of course, that he had given \$3,000 some months previously to leave Sacramento. Fitch and Pickering took the \$30,000 and went away on a European vacation. The *Times & Transcript* lingered around for a couple of years until it went broke and was absorbed by the *Alta California*, at the moment controlled by—Fitch!

## CHAPTER XI

# The *Call* Starts the Hard Way

MEANWHILE, the *Daily Morning Call* had come into the field and was battling for position. The beginnings of the *Call* were typical of the carefree San Francisco of the middle fifties. In 1856 when another depression was upon the land, five unemployed printers went into their favorite saloon, the Blue Wing, each hopeful that the other fellow had the price of a drink. They were not exactly broke, for each had an undivided one-fifth interest in a sackful of money, probably held in the saloon's safe. The sack held a sacred pool of \$650, gathered by the printers in a more happy financial day. It had been put aside for one purpose—to start a newspaper—and could not be touched except by unanimous vote.

This day they had gathered to decide whether to split it or go on grubbing for odd jobs. The vote was to hold on, to get options on some equipment, to decide upon a name. Rather than sit inside the

saloon sniffling the atmosphere in discouragement, the five adjourned outside. A bill poster from the Metropolitan Theater began to paste upon the wall of a building across the street a three-sheet program of the evening's performance. Suddenly one of the printers cried out: "I've got it! I've found the name!" He pointed to the theater announcement. The name of the play being advertised was "The Morning Call."

All agreed at once. They rushed inside the Blue Wing and cajoled the bartender into setting up a christening drink. The *Call* is enduring to this day.

Its first edition came off December 1, 1856. Under the imprimatur the proprietors were announced as "An Association of Practical Printers." They were James J. Ayers, Llewellyn Zublin, Charles F. Jobson, David W. Higgins and William L. Carpenter. They at once announced their newspaper to be in the one-bit field.

When the printers announced this price it meant their subscription rate would be twelve and a half cents per week. This field was not crowded. Pat Hull, the charming and handsome Irishman who made a small sensation by marrying the actress Lola Montez, had once had the one-bit field all to himself with his *Town Talk*. This was, of course, rather a lowcaste level, because of its readership, the low-grade advertisements of social-disease medicine, cheap auctions, gold-brick raffles which went into this class of newspaper. Pat Hull, getting ambitious during his wooing of the actress, tried to buck the two-bit field, already crowded with well-established papers. Hull went bust. Now the practical printers took over the vacant field, not too proud to make a little money, however strongly scented some of it was.

The *Call* had a definite set of policies, one of them a quarter of a century ahead of its time: opposition to Chinese immigration. This was to be the cause of the greatest civic battle in California's history; it would account for Kearneyism, the sandlot riots, new Vigilante battles, indirectly for the murder of a noted editor and a complete turnover in civic politics.

In its infant days the paper had a rocky time. Robert H. Newell, its editor, a homely, dumpy fellow who startled San Francisco by suddenly marrying the noted actress and poetess, Adah Isaacs Men-

ken, after the heavyweight champion "Benicia Boy" Heenan deserted her, was also deaf in one ear. He heard nevertheless that when the workmen in the Mint needed a little spare cash they took out gold planchets in wax in the instep of their shoes. While his spies were investigating this report, they came upon an odd zigzag flue in the Mint's huge chimney. It was, the government officials said, for control of the powerful draught. Newell wrote that it was a device for catching any vaporized gold, which later went into officials' pockets.

All this was excellent circulation-grabbing and Newell and the practical printers felt very good about it until one day the sheriff's men walked in and arrested the gang of them (including Newell) for criminal libel. It turned out that Newell had charged Major Jacob R. Snyder, Sub-Treasurer, with responsibility for the gold loss. It was suddenly disclosed to the frightened proprietors that there were two Snyders at the San Francisco Mint. The other man, the one Newell had intended to hold accountable, was J. H. Snyder, the Mint's assayer. The Major was very angry and entirely lost his dignity in some disturbing scenes while testifying before the grand jury. He was so hot that he had already hired the famous lawyer Colonel E. D. Baker as special prosecutor. Newell's deafness had caused the blunder. He had apparently listened only with his bad ear while taking the information from his gumshoers.

The *Call* bravely faced trial; said it could only say it was all a mistake because its editor did not have good hearing. The picture of the ink-stained, honest printers sitting there forlornly and drearily taking a verbal beating from Colonel Baker touched the hearts of the jurors. They graciously quarreled among themselves and refused to agree. Afterwards some of them said while it was true the *Call* had accused the wrong man it also had done its good deed in exposing conditions at the Mint. There was no re-trial when the *Call* published a long retraction and confessed all.

The printers had been doing the rough work under the impression that this was good business, but soon one of them wrote "While saving at the spigot, our money, through an unfaithful employee, was running out at the bung." He was writing about the cashier. One week there was no money in the till—and the cashier had taken

a boat for the Orient, "Where there ain't no Ten Commandments."

The actions of the absconding cashier pushed the *Call* perilously near the grave and now Fate began dragging at it from the other side. A few days after the *Call's* funds took a trip toward China, fire broke out in the plant and burned it up. It was such an angry fire that it melted all the type and parts of the presses. It was a Sunday, and since there was no Monday paper published anyhow, the printers had a chance to show how practical they were. They published a *Call* on Wednesday morning. It had been done piecemeal all over town. Each print shop furnished type and parts to the brothers in distress. When forms were gathered and carted to a printery, the printers turned the cranks and the presses flipped the sheets, and out came the *Call*. Its circulation stayed with it. There were loans floated and in five months the paper was back in its own building with new presses.

Adversity can become a heavy burden after a while, and soon the five were slipping out from under. It had been a sort of free-lunch society's project anyway. Carpenter sold out early and went into the police department as a copper, believing, possibly, that while newspapering is doubtful employment crime will always give steady salary. Zublin sold to Peter B. Foster, another printer, and went to the Sandwich Islands and died while en route back eighteen years later. Higgins sold to his partners in 1858 and went to Vancouver, B. C., to start a small paper and do well with it. Ayers sold to Loring Pickering in 1868, giving that fellow his entering wedge, and went to Los Angeles to edit the *Express*. Jobson was the only founder to remain with the *Call* long enough to die while still part owner.

Shortly after the close of the Civil War, the *Call* took a running dive into money trouble again, this time literally. The United States Government, apparently hopelessly ignorant of the Western psychology, had brashly demanded Californians accept greenbacks as if they were real money. The Gold State had never heard of such effrontery. Anything that could fold was not money. The *Call's* editors, more patriotic than cautious, thought editorially that the currency of a great government that had just won a civil war should be accepted in good faith by its own citizens. The circulation dropped several hundred the next morning.

That night, D. W. Cheesman, United States Sub-Treasurer from Washington, D. C., attempted to tell the city about the security behind Uncle Sam's paper money. He addressed a special meeting at Platt's Hall, and urged, rather timidly, that Western businessmen agree to accept the long green. The roars of anger and the howls of horror were so wild that Cheesman made a hurried exit—and kept right on going through the stagedoor into the alley. Part of the audience ran after him across the stage, the rest made a dash around the building from the front. The clothes of the Sub-Treasurer of the United States were partly torn off and he was badly mauled. He fought very well for a sedentary fellow and, finding a couple of opponents knocked down, jumped over them and lit off. He saw an open door down a street and skidded into it, demanding from the householder protection due an official of the United States Government. The door was slammed shut in time and locked against the yelling mob until the police arrived.

Newspaper reports next day said that Mr. Cheesman "narrowly escaped with his life." The *Call* said candidly that it had "seen the light" and was abandoning its argument for greenbacks. It did, however, "decry that the chief financial officer of the United States should be maltreated for even talking about the matter." It added shyly that it had thought since most of its subscribers were laboring men who seldom handled gold that they might have thought gold was not all that counted in life.

It was true most of the *Call's* readers were laboring men, for it had remained in the one-bit field where cheaper goods were advertised. For a while it had not been alone in the field. William M. Hinton had started the *Morning Star* with the 12½-cent subscription rate. He named as editor Bret Harte, whose newspaper experience then consisted of the timorous slipping of contributions under editorial doors at night. Harte never bothered to learn the business. He gave large space to nursery rhymes and forgot all the important issues of the day. The paper and Harte's job lasted only a few months.

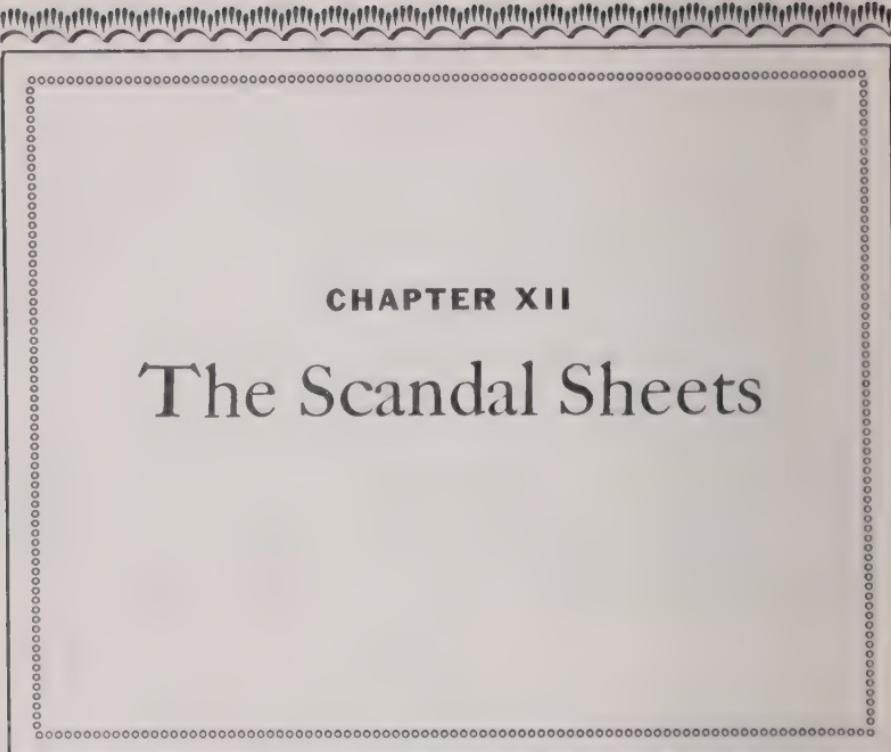
While all these things were happening to the *Call*, Loring Pickering, who had previously been part owner of the *Times & Transcript* and, briefly, of the *Alta*, was quietly pocketing control. A rival paper later said the domination cost him \$105,000, a great deal

of money in the sixties. His ownership was only known when one day he posted a notice that he would no longer pay printers their rate—now cut to 76 cents per 1,000 ems set. The place was struck at once. Pickering brought in women and started to teach them the business—the first women compositors on the Pacific Coast. The union men swarmed around, married the girls.

"The *Call* office became a matrimonial agency," said Pickering years later. "Every woman we had got married."

Pickering gave up and paid the 76 cents.

He also asked George K. Fitch to come back into the business with him—and the famous partnership was re-formed, to last beyond the grave. For many years they were to work side by side, one controlling the *Call*, the other the *Bulletin*, each paper with a separate and often divergent policy.



## CHAPTER XII

# The Scandal Sheets



Barney, the Butcher, came out of the house and struck his poor wife twice and went off. His wife sat at the door and cried, and after awhile went away. Soon after Barney came back and entered the house with a noted harpist's wife. It is said that the residence of this lady is not conducted as refined as it might be, and she is not particularly in favor of total abstinence. Be this as it may, I only desire to call attention to the fact that a husband should not be so brutal to his wife on the public street.

Barney the Butcher and the harpist's wife were news in the late fifties, along with a number of other unblest sinners. Two weekly scandal sheets kept the town smirking and their publishers eating fairly regularly. Dr. T. DeM. Hylton, a medico of sorts, operated *Our Mazeppa*. The name had no point, particularly, but it permitted, of course, use of a nude on the cover. The other unhealthy paper was the *Sunday Varieties*, edited by J. Walter Walsh, an ex-newspaperman who held money in great respect.

Doc Hylton's paper gave the addresses of all houses of prostitution. He did it with straightforward fraud:

MANSIONS TO BE LET ALONE:

"As strangers out 'house hunting' are being constantly imposed upon, we here commence publishing a list of houses which should be let alone by all those who have no ambition for notoriety, and we shall keep the list standing in our columns so that it may serve as a reference to all. Each week fresh numbers shall be added."

Then came the heading:

HOUSES OF ASSIGNATION:

(And below a list of twenty-seven such places, addresses complete.)

PUBLIC HOUSES:

(Then eighty-two listings on Waverly Place, Dupont Street and Spofford Alley, all noted avenues of sin until the 1912 Blue Sky Law.)

COMMON HOUSES WITH BAR ROOMS:

(And a listing of twelve places.)

He made no silly pretense, however, about a certain saloon:

"Eagle Saloon, between Jackson and Pacific Sts.

The accommodating proprietors never fail to afford satisfaction to their numerous visitors. They keep the best wines, liquors and cigars in the market and their *Waiter Girls* are unequaled for beauty, honesty and amiability. Call and test their luxuries."

Walsh's *Varieties* had the keenest sense of blackmail. Now and then it honestly thrust a greedy palm outward:

"Simon, Austin, Nevada—Yours referring to the conduct of Mrs. O'N—and Picayune Jack, the shoemaker. We will publish when you send the \$10 expenses."

Its columns were oddly put together. The editor had selected from numerous parts of the state a list of Correspondents, all of whom worked under synonyms of their locality: "Sacramento," "Diablo," "Colorado," etc. Those who wrote from San Francisco gave such names as street-corner locations or signed as "Viper," "Night Owl," "Asmodeus."

It was "A Traveler" who reported for *Our Mazeppa*:

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"How did Tommy N—— and Frenchy enjoy their buggy ride the other Sunday? What were the Captain and Nelly H—— hunting for in Hardy's Woods the other Saturday night about 10 o'clock? Hope they found it. The gay blacksmith not far from the Eagle House who took a young lady to the C—— restaurant last Sunday had better make an honorable amend soon, else full names and particulars of the affair may come to light much to his discontent."

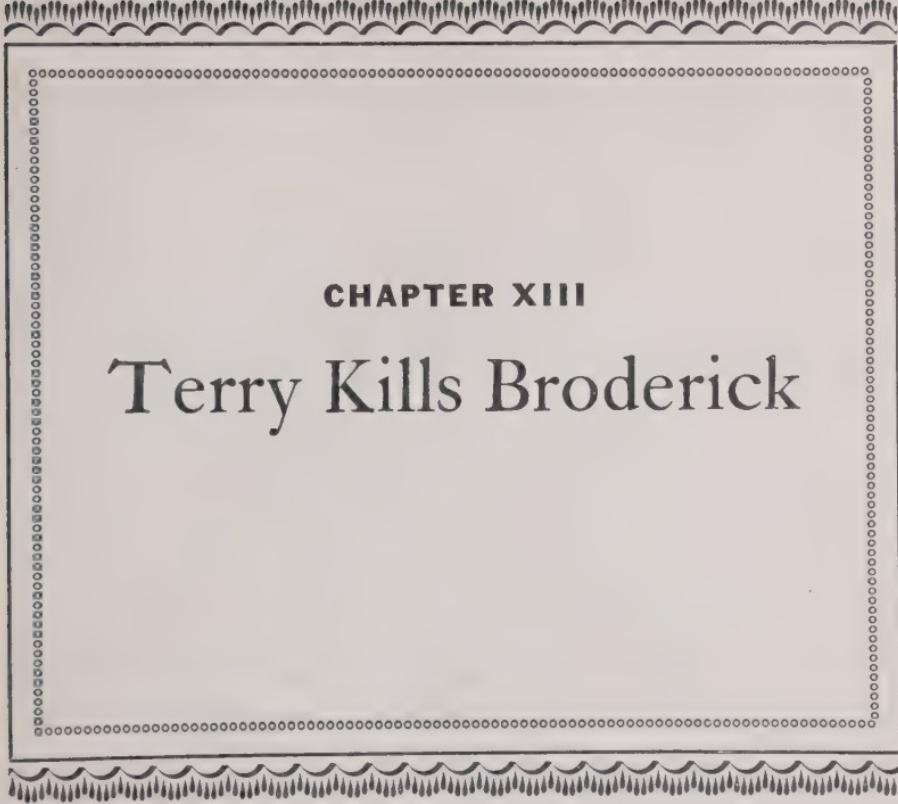
The magnified pettinesses of little people, later known as "keyhole reporting," held first place in the scandal sheets for a number of years. Some of it was touched with viciousness:

"Ellen Y——, If you had any sense you'd get your divorce first before you put on airs; but we would like to know who you expect to get a divorce from? Is it Mr. Y—— or the ragman? When you get your divorce, do you intend to marry that fellow who called you a 'drunken old blister' the other day, while you were standing at the Corner of Sacramento and Drum?"

Doc Hylton personally seems to have had considerable physical courage. He signed this one:

"A greater vagabond, coward and bully than dirty, drunken *Mister* Johnny Marshall cannot be found in the state. His recent cowardly assault on Frank Rivers and another brutal attack on a drunken man, have convinced Mr. Lee (his partner in a saloon) that he must send blackguard Jack—as he is called in the profession—to clean boots or buggies in a hotel or stable, as he did originally. Why did not the cowardly bully attack us, *we*, the writer of this paragraph, when face to face we told him as much and more in the sitting room of the International Hotel of this city before *forty* witnesses, in May last? Blackguard Jack knew himself to be coward, and instead of attacking us by blows, he went to the door to call an officer, to arrest us for *abusing* him."

There is also an account in this issue of what must have been an interesting occasion. It was a dance given at the Musical Hall by "the notorious French charlatan and purveyor Paul Sasportas." It was officially known and advertised as The Prostitutes' Ball, and the account says "a lot of virtuous people were there."



## CHAPTER XIII

# Terry Kills Broderick

ON JUNE 30, 1859, there appeared in the *Bulletin* "A Card to the Public," signed by D. W. Perley, former law partner of State Supreme Court Justice David Terry. A "card," of course, is today a "Letter to the Editor." Perley was a Britisher who took American politics very seriously but didn't bother to become a citizen. He was writing to inform the public that:

"Monday last at the breakfast table at the International Hotel and in the presence of ladies I was insulted in the grossest manner by the Hon. D. C. Broderick. It was not the place to resent openly the insult and I stepped from the room after words and awaited friends. Through them I demanded satisfaction for the insult and was refused. . . .

"It only remains for me to say that I consider Mr. Broderick as devoid of courage as he is of principle and that he has no longer any right to call himself a gentleman."

At the end of the notice Perley renewed his challenge and again named a friend to represent him. All this in view of the fact there was a state law against dueling.

A few days later, United States Senator David C. Broderick answered, also in the *Bulletin*. He said Perley's sense of propriety should have taught him there is more to a duel than getting publicity in the press. He added, sagaciously, that Mr. Perley, lacking American citizenship, was also not subject to dueling laws, which, among other penalties, caused forfeiture of public office for participation. He was, he also explained patiently, in the midst of a heated political campaign to aid the gubernatorial candidate, and he ended with a hint that there might be evil plans of his enemies in the challenge:

"I will not fight during this campaign, for if I accept one then the many lying in wait will also demand a chance."

With this, Perley had to be content.

Election day came weeks later and the Broderick faction was badly beaten. As far as the public knew, the Senator, taking his party's defeat quietly and philosophically, was preparing to return to Washington. Then, on September 9, the *Bulletin* had a small story perched atop its main news page:

"The street is full of rumors this morning in relation to an anticipated duel between Senators Gwin and Broderick. We see no reason for this. We believe Broderick got a challenge but that it was from Chief Justice Terry of the State Supreme Court in whose behalf Perley was recipient of a gross insult in the International Hotel June last."

The *Bulletin* was doing the best guessing as this most famous of all political tragedies of the West began to take form. Behind the mention of Gwin was a long and interesting quarrel between him and his fellow-Democrat. Both had had previous duels and the bitterness of their last political battle was good grounds for belief a duel might be pending. Again it was the battle of the split in the same party. But it was the second part of the newspaper's report that was correct. It was to be Broderick-Terry, but the basis of the duel did lie in this famous quarrel between the two United States Senators from California.

Broderick, then thirty-nine years old, had learned his politics as a

Democratic ward leader in New York City. Dr. William M. Gwin, a handsome, strapping man six feet two inches tall, had been a pupil of General Andrew Jackson in Tennessee. He was a medico who had never practiced.

Legislatures elected United States Senators in those days; in fact, did until a surprisingly few years ago. Broderick easily won the long term, and Milton S. Latham, later to be Governor, had an edge at first over Dr. Gwin. The political skirmishes became a full war. It was a stalemate, finally, which only the successful Broderick could break by orders to his faithful bloc. He was silent.

In the dark secrecy of midnight, Gwin and a friend slipped from their lodgings and crept like the prototypes of all real cloak-and-dagger characters along Sacramento alleys and over its back fences. They wore long capes and soft, broad-brimmed hats pulled down over their eyes. Thus Gwin slipped unseen into the rooms of Broderick, had a quiet talk as his friend kept watch outside like a faithful family guard. Then the two, still using alleys and backyards, glided back to Gwin's rooms. The doctor, Historian James O'Meara said, wore a satisfied smile.

In the Legislature that day, the Broderick forces left an also-ran they had been hovering over and cast for Gwin. That carried him into the United States Senate.

Broderick and Gwin went to Washington and for a time all seemed well. Along the grapevine soon came rumors that short-termer Gwin was getting all the patronage and long-termer Broderick had been snubbed by President Buchanan. It was all true.

Kansas about this time was seeking admittance to the Union. Buchanan had supported the Lecompton or pro-slavery constitution for the candidate state. That was the raising of a red flag to a bull like Broderick who began to tell the Senate and all who would listen how he hated slavery. That, President Buchanan did not particularly like. He already had Stephen A. Douglas fighting him on the Kansas slave issue and Broderick's alliance with the Little Giant did not make the President feel any happier. Gwin was definitely for a slavery constitution for Kansas. The only satisfaction Buchanan could get was in edging patronage into Gwin's lap.

Broderick, somewhat unreasonably, blamed Gwin. There were

short words at first, then only nods and then silence as they passed. When they both returned to take part in the state's gubernatorial fight in the autumn of 1859, the two Democratic Senators from California had not spoken to each other in eighteen months!

Latham was now running for Governor. He and Gwin were again friends, the latter campaigning for his remade friend. So Broderick decided to take both on for a battle. Before a large audience in Sacramento, he opened the fight:

"I come tonight to arraign before you two great criminals, Milton S. Latham and William M. Gwin."

That was typical of the irresponsible political oratory of the day, although the speaker did have at least a definite charge to advance in its favor. There had been, he said, a positive agreement made at that secret midnight meeting by which Gwin had willed the senior Senator the Federal patronage. Gwin, he claimed, had made it in writing. That note had been placed in the hands of State Senator W. I. Ferguson for safekeeping.

In 1858, shortly after receiving that letter, Ferguson, a noted bar-room brawler, got into a row that resulted in a duel and his death. Broderick now charged that before the body of Ferguson was decently cold, his desk in the Capitol had been rifled. By whom? By those most interested in destroying that letter.

Both Gwin and Latham denied the charge and threw a few curves themselves. It was one of the great political campaigns of California. It was in the midst of this Wild West political campaign that Broderick, at breakfast in the International Hotel in San Francisco, was unfortunate enough to sit near Duncan W. Perley.

Chief Justice David Terry seems to have more or less wandered into the quarrel that was to mark his life and cast him as one of the state's most glamorous and tragic figures. He was neither a friend of Gwin nor an enemy of Broderick. But he was a Southern pro-slavery Democrat who believed Broderick's anti-slavery stand in the Senate was traitorous to his party. As a result, at the June Democratic convention, Terry pulled his elegant six feet three inches upright and waved his forefinger and cried that Broderick must go. He must be read from the party. Backing his demand, he said some

angry things, all of them in what reporters recorded dutifully as a stentorian tone.

It was a newspaper report of these utterances that Broderick was reading while waiting breakfast. From his following ill-tempered, early-morning remarks over a bowl of mush, one of the great political duels of the times was fought and the code duello was drummed out of Western society—and California was probably saved for the Union.

At the table with Broderick were, besides the impulsive Lawyer Perley, Mr. and Mrs. Abia A. Selover. This is, most naturally, the same Selover, auctioneer and alderman, always around when evil things were brewing, yet never an active participant in them. Broderick read the article and scowled and grumphed and muttered to Perley:

"I see your friend Terry has been abusing me at Sacramento."

Perley: What is it, Mr. Broderick?

Broderick: The damned miserable wretch after being kicked out of the convention, went down there and made a speech abusing me. I have defended him at times when all others deserted him. I paid and supported three newspapers to defend him during the Vigilante Committee days, and this is all the gratitude I get from the damned miserable wretch for the favors I have conferred on him. I have hitherto spoken of him as an honest man—as the only honest man on the bench of a miserable, corrupt Supreme Court—but now I find I was mistaken. I take it all back. He is just as bad as the others.

Perley: I will inform the Judge of the language used concerning him.

Broderick: Do so; I wish you to do so. I am responsible for it.

Perley: You would not dare to use this language to him—and you shall not use it to me concerning him. I shall hold you responsible for the language of insult and menace you have used!

Broderick snorted, and Perley jumped up and went outside the dining room, seeking friends to carry a challenge to the Senator.

Terry, of course, had heard all about the insult at his home near Stockton, where he lived with a wife who called him "Cousin

David," because of some obscure married relationship of aunts and uncles. Since Perley's challenge had been refused and Broderick's restrictive period of the campaign was over, Terry had inherited the right to carry on the code duello. Terry was then thirty-six years old, a gallant figure who carried his 220 pounds of well-trained body proudly. He wore chin whiskers with a clean upper lip and had heavy brows; a striking man who liked cards, women, horses. He had been the thorn that festered in the side of the Committee of Vigilance and quickened its demise.

In his manorial gardens up the river, Justice Terry continued to walk now on those beautiful summer days while friends came, furtively seeking his intentions toward Broderick. Terry's wife wrote urgent appeals to every friend in the state whom she considered capable of arguing her husband out of the violent action.

Terry said nothing but walked his garden. Then suddenly the challenge went forth. Broderick, surprised, asked for a definite list of accusations. These were sent. They were the old Perley charges. Broderick, although obviously not anxious to fight, did not deny the remarks of the breakfast table. He suggested that he withdraw them and Terry likewise recall his, made at the convention which had caused Broderick's outburst. Terry refused the compromise.

The only course then left open to Broderick was to fight. He announced his seconds as J. C. McKibben, Congressman from Sierra County, and David Colton, ex sheriff of Siskiyou County and later to become historically famous for his connection with the Big Four in the Central Pacific Railroad manipulations. Calhoun Benham, lawyer and United States Attorney for California, and Colonel Tom Hayes, former county clerk for San Francisco, were to act for Terry.

Arrangements were made with all the pomposity and ceremony of a medieval joust. Terry resigned his Supreme Court post. He prepared to break the law off the bench rather than on it for some quixotic reason of his own. A long rodomontade of language and meetings of seconds and the choosing of type of pistols followed.

The opposing parties, arrogantly sure of their importance, drove boldly on September 12th into the city's Merced Lake district near the ocean and the county line. They had a line of buggies drawn by spirited horses and they spanked along at a great rate.

Police Chief Martin J. Burke was chasing them, however—in the morgue wagon. All other vehicles had been hired by spectators and the police department did not own a horse, let alone a rig. The Chief had a warrant in his pocket. It had been sworn to by Mark Brumagim, a banker friend of both men. He had gone before Police Judge Coons, charging them with intent to duel. Burke had the warrant endorsed by a judge across in San Mateo County because the duel site was on the border.

By the time the coroner's lumbering cart was able to catch up with the party, Broderick had won the toss and he and Terry were taking positions. Burke was very firm and a little ridiculous as he made his last-second appearance. But he made his authority stick. He ordered all of them into court. They picked up their talmas and followed him, agreeable gentlemen before the law.

They went confidently before Judge Coons later in the day and that great friend to both smiled the whole matter off the calendar. He said with his usual florid elocution that since no duel had been fought no crime had been committed. He didn't realize in his anxiety to please important personages how unfriendly he was. Burke gave up the struggle and went back to the whist game in the station house.

All this action was duly registered in the press, much to the delighted anticipation of the readers. The *Bulletin* said:

"It is supposed they will fight within a day or two. Chief Burke has undoubtedly not spoiled much good newspaper reading. The fur is bound to fly and the public be highly entertained. It is not *mal-a-propos* that the police rode out to the dueling grounds in the coroner's dead wagon."

The next day, two physicians abandoned whatever patients they had to tag along with the belligerents. One was a particularly noted character of the city, Dr. Ferdinand Loehr, editor of the German anti-Lecompton newspaper, the *California Demokrat*. He was one more of the medicos of the pioneer city who liked pen pushing better than pill rolling. He had been chosen to attend Broderick. If he ever knew any medicine there is small proof of it. He was dirty, stupid, arrogant and Prussian, and he came upon the dueling grounds dragging a filthy sack from the top of which protruded a saw!

"The whole paraphernalia of the doctor," wrote Historian O'Meara (who was there), "was suggestive of desperate operations in surgery to come. He walked all over the field partly dragging this horrible sack with the rattle of instruments and ugly protruding saw and its plethora of linen rags for bandages. Broderick walked with him while he dragged the sack. And after all this, Dr. Loehr didn't have the proper restoratives or bandages and Terry's doctor had to help him."

The other physician was Dr. William Hammond, who attended Terry with a deportment that indicated he had long ago learned the hard way that life was just an unalterable predetermined course of things. He marched upon the field while the preliminaries were being completed, beamed upon the crowd, formally shook all idle hands he could reach, spread his overcoat on the damp grass and calmly sat down to take up again reading of a medical journal he had studied in his carriage while en route.

Bernard Lagoarde, the finical gunsmith, was there, too, with his box of pistols under his arm and a hopeful light in his eyes. He had been requested by Broderick's men to bring his set and he was very proud and not unappreciative of the fact that the use of his guns would be excellent for business.

Terry, however, got the toss and the choice of weapons and passed over Lagoarde's proffered case of pistols. Instead, he turned to the Belgian dueling pistols with eight-inch barrels that had been brought by a friend. Lagoarde was deeply hurt, and to assuage his feelings it was agreed that he might have the honor of loading the weapons. This he did with skill and finesse under the suspicious eyes of seconds.

The scene of the Terry-Broderick duel was idyllic. It was a small wooded dell, just at the southerly tip of Merced Lake. That dawn, however, it was anything but a spot of pastoral beauty. A crowd had come early to see the show and was tramping all over the place with the fervor of trippers.

The affair was such public knowledge that hundreds knew just when and where it was to be fought. To get there had been a problem for many because there were not enough hacks for hire.



Twenty vehicles were all San Francisco stablemen had to offer the public and these were now on the edge of the woods. Sixty-seven spectators had arrived.

The newspaper editors, who should have recognized more than anyone else the news value of this dramatic event, failed their public. There were only three newspapermen on the scene—and all of them were from one paper, the *Call*. The *Bulletin* later had to admit all its information was second-hand.

The crowd continued to wander over the field until asked by seconds to clear the way for action. The sixty-seven backed away, reluctant as most nuisance crowds, to a small hillock just out of range.

"They had come," said the *Daily Times* reporter (who was not there), "with the instinct that draws the vultures to the feast."

The principals came on the field for the second time at 6:30 o'clock. The sun was just beating its way up through the dawn fog. The sinister doctors now made their calm preparations. Terry and Broderick conversed quietly with their seconds. The pistols were chosen, loaded and examined by opposing seconds. Neither opponent paid much attention to his adversary. Broderick seemed unhappy, nervous and weary. It was reported he had not slept. Terry was steady, calm, reserved.

The ten paces, as agreed upon, were then marked off and double-checked by the seconds, and a line drawn where each duelist should stand. Perfunctory search was made of both principal's bodies by the other's seconds, a vestigial remnant of a formal procedure that had been carried from the days of rapiers when occasionally an unsporting swordsman wore a hidden steel jerkin. Watches and coins were then removed from the pockets of contestants. Broderick quietly handed his few coins to his seconds; Terry tossed his into the grass. Positions were taken.

Both were dressed entirely in black. They also wore slouched black hats, pulled well down over the eyes. As they stood there, the Code Duello was read by a second.

If the scene had been chosen by a playwright it could not have been better set. The rippling lake in the background, the slight

slope upon which the curious sixty-seven watched silently, the opening in the thicket where stood, dueling pistols in hands, two of the state's most famous men.

Terry took the stiff pose of a practiced duelist, presenting only the edge of his body and holding his left hand and shoulder well back. Broderick's stance was careless; he constantly shifted his feet. Once he got his foot over the line and had it brought back by his meticulous second.

At 6:45 o'clock, Colton, a Broderick second, called: "Gentlemen, are you ready?"

Both men repeated, "Ready."

Colton then said clearly: "Fire! One! Two!"

It had been agreed that after the word "Fire!" the triggers could be pulled and pistols must be discharged before the word "Three!" or fire withheld.

"Broderick," said Witness O'Meara's report, "raised his pistol and scarce brought it to an angle of forty-five degrees from its downward position when it was discharged, and the ball entered the ground about four paces in front of Terry.

"Justice Terry fired a few instants later. Broderick was observed to clap his left hand to the right side of his breast. He reeled slowly to the left and before his seconds could reach him fell (not heavily) to the ground, with his right leg doubled under him and his hand still grasping his weapon. Terry folded his arms, still holding his smoking pistol in his hand.

"The seconds and doctor ran to Broderick. It was disclosed that the bullet had entered just forward of the right nipple and lodged under the left arm."

The Senator was carried to his carriage after the incompetent Dr. Loehr had asked Terry's physician to give first aid to his man. Over the farm roads and along the bumpy, unpaved streets of the pioneer city the bleeding man was carried in the buggy until he reached the home of Leonidas Haskell, an old friend who lived at Black Point (now Fort Mason). There he lingered, propped up in bed because in that position only could he breathe properly. Many came to wish him well, but he was dying.

He died early in the day, September 16th, and every newspaper in



San Francisco, including the *Police Gazette*, inverted rules to give the news columns black borders.

The newspapers that had been candidly reporting the progress of the duel as it went along now began to scream for the blood of the victor. Broderick, once called by James King of William the fountainhead of the city's corruption and only recently repudiated by the voters, was now suddenly a great hero. Living, he had been disowned; dead, he was a martyr. The city went into mourning with buildings draped and flags at half-staff.

Terry had gone up the river to his ranch estate and walked his gardens again while he awaited arrest. It came at last and he was returned to San Francisco and released on \$10,000 bail. He asked and got a change of venue to Marin County, across the Golden Gate. On the day of his trial, a small sailboat carrying the prosecution witnesses was still en route to the San Rafael courtroom when a tough old country judge dismissed the charge. Judge J. H. Hardy, sitting for the regular jurist "who had business elsewhere," had always opened session at 9 A.M. in the foothills where he usually held court. The witnesses had been subpoenaed, however, for 10 A.M. Judge Hardy was not interested when told this. He impaneled a jury without questioning and demanded testimony. When no witnesses were available he promptly ordered the jury to bring in a verdict for acquittal.

Said the startled *Alta*: "The whole affair seems to have been fobbed off in indecent haste." Said the angry *Bulletin*: "The court clock had also been put ahead many minutes by some one conniving, and most of the jury anyway seemed to be anything else but members of the Dashaway (temperance) Society."

Poor, defeated Broderick had died with the din in his ears of a battle royal between hard-swinging editors. They stood toe to toe, slugging it out all over Page Two. (Page One was still sacred to advertisers.) A mightier river of words never overran its banks. Editors, their writing elbows resting on the buttresses of popular sanction, announced most definitely they were now—and, of course, always had been—desperately horrified at duels. A number got so heated about this that they were on the verge of issuing challenges. They swung their full-blooded and gallant ardor finally into some

semblance of solidarity—against the *Bulletin*. They hinted, unhindered by a proper sense of guilty envy, that this newspaper knew too much all along about the preliminaries. One editor suggested that the *Bulletin's* editor, Mr. Fitch, might well be indicted as an accessory before the fact. If it were true that the *Bulletin* was in on the preliminaries more than other papers there is small excuse for its failure to have a reporter on the scene. Fitch dug in and hurled back two for one. He even came up with a poem that started:

*Who is't that seeks, in this enlightened age,  
In mortal strife his fellow to engage?*

and went on for many glowing, if unmetrical, lines to say who was't and how he was't until it came to a smashing climactic ending:

*Then he who seeks to urge the deadly strife  
To show his skill in taking human life  
To right an error, or remove a slur  
He is a coward and a murderer.*

Clergymen followed where the editorial torch beckoned, and many was the fine burning phrase that flung itself with abandon over the heads of the congregations. Broderick, by dying at the hands of a man more despised than he, had become an example and a pledge and a very famous man in California history. It was not all verbalism. An angry revenge campaign opened as editors sought someone upon whom to pin the blame. Terry, already under indictment, was a natural prey that, once devoured, left scrawny scraps over which to smack a lip.

Meanwhile, the Battle of the Editors grew to such intensity that they forgot the cause or issue, if there ever had been one. The *Bulletin*, using "a card," the uncourageous method of editors of the day, flung out hot words at Editor C. A. Washburn of the *Times* merely because he had dared to claim the intimacy of friendship with the slain Broderick. The card was signed by Charles Sumner, photographic reporter (shorthand writer), who boldly asserted Washburn was "a faker." Washburn, hurt, lashed out with an editorial that dis-

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closed the photographic reporter was also editor of the *Post*, "a little seven by nine flash or switch paper."

Sumner spluttered back with sarcastic words, which incidentally he used to prove he, also, was a friend of Broderick:

"Broderick said to this writer only a month previously, 'Oh, Washburn is the mere mouthpiece of Colonel Baker's enemies. (Col. E. D. Baker, the silver-tongued friend of Broderick, who was to have a city and a county in Oregon and a San Francisco street named for him.) He is a dirty dog, sir—a dirty dog. He used to sniffle and slobber about me last Spring, but I understood him perfectly. Yes, the contemptible whifflit!'"

In the midst of their violent pleasures, the editors broke off punching holes in the air to take in the Broderick funeral. San Francisco can put on a funeral when it wishes, or a street dance, or a fair, or a riot! It does these things superlatively well.

It was Sunday, which is usually a cheerful occasion in San Francisco, but 10,000 gathered to praise and bury the fallen gladiator in little Portsmouth Square. There was a speakers' stand erected under the flagpole on the high corner, and this platform was covered with mourning wreaths and draperies. John Middleton, Grand Marshal for the Day, and his seven aides were on horseback. There were thirty-three active pallbearers.

After a flowery speech by Colonel Baker, that ended, "Good friend! True hero! Hail and farewell!" the coffin was placed on a caisson. The cortege moved away and the City Hall fire bell, muffled with rags, tolled, and all the many other fire bells in widely separated fire houses, also muffled, took up the dirge. Eighteen companies of fire fighters fell in behind, as did members of the Pioneer Society and most of the 10,000 spectators. All marched four abreast. The procession marched for some time away from the cemetery and through the principal streets on the other side of town, but eventually reversed itself and got to Lone Mountain.

## CHAPTER XIV

# Stay East, Young Man!

TIRED, unhappy, boil-ridden Horace Greeley, editor of the *New York Tribune*, came to San Francisco in August of 1859. He had been carted across the prairies and dumped from one town to another until he was a sad sight in his rusty, well-worn coat (once white) as he loped along with his jerky walk, toting his still rustier and more worn and faded blue cotton umbrella.

When the official reception committee met him at Benicia and brought him down on the riverboat, he carried a pair of blankets done up in an oil-cloth cover. The rest of his belongings were cached away in a small age-glazed bag, upon which was stamped, "H. Greeley, 154 Nassau Street, New York, 1855."

By the time he struck the fog around the bay—it was August—he slipped off the famous white coat that he had worn thirty years and

into what reporters described as "a drab overcoat from which mountaineers had cut off all buttons to keep as souvenirs." He clung desperately to his umbrella as if it were salvation itself and complained he had not been able to use it in a number of weeks. He did not seem to realize that most of California sees no rain for all its dry-grass summer months.

Reporters flocked about him, admired him greatly, for he was then the heroic editor. They admired his nerve, too, in breaking so successfully into the New York field, as precarious then as now. They remembered how he had flung his *Tribune* into a field of twelve dailies in 1841 with a capital of \$2,000, half of it borrowed, and now, eighteen years later, was the famous journalist of the country. He had reared his weak baby into a giant by refusing, among other things, to run police reports, scandals or dubious medical advertisements. He was considered very radical indeed, for he was constantly striking out at railroad grants and the heartlessness of corporations.

Six years later this character was to become famous for another man's "Go west, young man, go west!" Greeley never claimed the remark. When he used it in an editorial in his *Tribune*, July 13, 1865, it was repeated from the remarks of Editor J. L. B. Soule in the Terre Haute, Indiana, *Express* several years earlier. "Go west, young man, and grow up with the country," wrote Greeley, and suddenly this innocent and prosy remark was on the tongue of the nation. At once Greeley printed Soule's editorial to show its source.

But it was six years after he had himself gone west that Greeley wrote his westward-ho editorial. He changed his mind to do it. When he was in San Francisco—1859—he wrote this to his paper:

"I don't think it advisable to tell young men, or any other, to come here expecting to make their pile and return to the East. The chances of doing this, always doubtful, have nearly ceased to exist. . . . Of those who come hereafter, nine-tenths will go back disappointed and impoverished, or stay here paupers. The chances for 'big strikes' in the mines are few, and greenhorns cannot share them."

"As to labor for wages, it is generally well paid—say from \$25 to \$40 a month, besides board, and for mechanics still higher. But employment is precarious, whether in the cities, or the mines, while the

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farmers are shy of hiring at high wages when wheat brings but one dollar a bushel.

"I cannot consider it worth any man's while to risk the price of a passage hither for the chance of getting employment by the month. The experiment will usually cost all it comes to. If you come to California at all, come to stay; and nowhere else will you find a little money more desirable than here."

Had Horace Greeley told young women to go west, he might have made a more perfect score, for in summing up one of his letters to the *Tribune* he said that what San Francisco really needed was "more virtuous, educated, energetic women. They should not come, however, unless they have the protection of relatives or a trusted friend. Women's wages are at least thrice as high on the Pacific as in the East."

He thought California a strange state. He liked the Big Trees, the amount of oats grown in the valleys; scolded because the price of "white, insipid-looking butter was fifty cents a pound." The prehistoric fact that for many months the hills burn brown for lack of rain worried him greatly all the time he was in the state.

Perhaps his anxieties were emphasized by the duress of boils that got so bad he had to give up plans to return home by the Butterfield Stage and instead take a ship down the coast to Panama. Now it can be told, since moderns are not so pure of thought, that those boils kept him standing up much of the time and would hardly permit him to experience pleasure in a springless stagecoach.

Boils or no, San Francisco took Greeley to its heart with its usual roughhouse, radiant enthusiasm. Workmen spent long hours preparing the setting for a big affair. Newspapers gave large space to his arrival. Said the candid reporters:

"He is about fifty years of age, and stands nearly six feet high and is tolerable broad in the shoulders. His hair is flaxen, thinly scattered below the crown and around the back and sides of his head. The top of his head is entirely bald. He wears a whisker under his chin. His gait is peculiar. He lifts not only his feet but his hips when he walks, and keeps his head bent some distance in front of his body."

At Battery, Bush and Market Streets there is today a triangular space, now occupied by a pioneer statue and a safety station. At one

of the sides of the triangle there was in Greeley's day the Oriental Hotel, a stylish inn with a long, second-story veranda, a good dining room and a dance floor. Here gathered during the visit 5,000 of the city's noisiest people to hear Greeley speak. By 7 P.M., an hour before the scheduled appearance, the mob had already gathered and was overflowing up the side streets. Bonfires outlined the tiny plaza; along the buildings, roped to the walls, torches spluttered and dripped oil. Japanese lanterns swung along the hotel's veranda, below which a platform was raised about six feet. The veranda itself was reserved for ladies whose husbands had a pull with the reception committee.

Finally the band blared forth a great flourish of trumpets and there, amidst the wild cheers, stood Horace Greeley, still wearing his drab overcoat. He stood there and listened to the cheers and heard them change key as disappointment swelled up in his audience. It was because few could see him and seeing him was part of the show. The cheers changed into outraged yelling, a habit of candid San Francisco crowds. Chairman Colonel J. B. Crockett shouted valiantly if futilely for silence. The mob yelled for Greeley to take the hotel balcony, but he protested he could neither be seen nor heard there because of the noise and glare of the large spluttering crude-oil torches. At last a table was dragged from the hotel lobby and placed on the platform and Greeley gingerly mounted it. The crowd, satisfied, fell silent.

As he talked, he took off his overcoat and he was dressed in black instead of his usual white jacket. He fell into the easy speech for which he was so famous. He said that the railroad could be built, double-tracked from Chicago to San Francisco, for \$50,000 a mile or one hundred million dollars for the job. He advocated that the corporation daring to take on the risk should be granted land for one mile deep along the right of way, an idea rather foreign to his previous charges against the greedy railroads. He drew great roars of applause all during his talk, and the crowd danced up and down when he said that some not-too-distant day New York and San Francisco would be only ten days apart by rail. (The Overland Stage was making St. Louis to San Francisco in 21 days.)

It was a great ovation and yet the next night when he spoke in a

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jammed auditorium of the First Congregational Church he faced a great silence before he had spoken ten minutes. For he had begun to explain his position in the realm of social significance. He was noted as an individualist, although few knew what that meant. He had been forgiven earlier for complaining about the corporations, but now he was on a mysterious subject.

"He was telling," said the *Bulletin*, "his position on the subjects of 'Socialism' or 'Communism.' The time was not ripe for this dream for which he labored and sacrificed, he said. The time would come, however, when it would be put into practice. It might be 50 or 1,000 years—but the period would arrive."

It was long after he had wandered from this subject that the audience warmed up to him that night. However, his force of personality was such that when he finished he "sat down under an applause that was thunderous."

All this activity was hard for Greeley, now that his boils were boiling again. The next day he wired to the San Jose committee: "I am covered with boils so that I cannot ride this week. Hope to be in San Jose Monday, but I am not certain."

The next night the mob at the American Theater thought Greeley a very funny man when he spoke about royalty, one of his pet aversions. He said about those born of the purple:

"English Guelphs, Austrian Hapsburgs, Russian Romanoffs hold space in the world's eye only because of the accident of birth and the purple which their ancestry threw over their shoulders. They are really sorry specimens of humanity. No matter what bells rang or cannon fired, and rockets exploded at their birth, and prayers solemnly intoned, and toasts loyally drunk at their christenings, and all manner of blessings and wise guidance duly invoked at their coronations—they still remain what God made them, prosaic, fat-witted personages, with vigorous appetites and carnal inclinations, and lack-lustre eyes and unremarkable powers of speech and even less enviable powers of thought and a tendency to abdominal protuberance and a decided aptitude for gout and other aristocratic distempers, by which they were, in due season, done to death in right royal and satisfactory manner. And a royal carcass feeds worms equally with that of the humble and the poor."

Except for the very pointed last sentence, his neatly connected clauses (approx. 153 words) took a lot of wind and proved what an orator he was by being able to swing it. He seems to have said all there is to say, from the opposition viewpoint, about royalty, although it was better than sixty years before he won two-thirds of his argument: where are the Hapsburgs and Romanoffs today?

Greeley also held a temperance lecture before the Dashaway Society, in which he told the SRO audience to "avoid tempting allurements of liquor" and drew a dramatic comparison between "sobriety and the awful abyss from which there is no redemption."

When he left on the ship a great mob stood and cheered until the vessel was through the Golden Gate. San Francisco has never given an editor such a play since.

(And when the Reverend Thomas Starr King came to San Francisco to become pastor of the First Unitarian Church, he was told by Greeley as he left New York: "You will be fascinated by the West, except San Francisco, which I think has the worst climate, and is the most infernal hole on the face of the earth.")

## CHAPTER XV

# Advertising Poets

GREELEY found San Francisco had very few good newspapers, although he was much too sagacious to say such a rude thing. The *Bulletin* and *Alta* led the field and were rather "modern" according to standards of the day. The *Herald* had begun again after the Vigilantes ruined it and was striving to please a public that was hard to satisfy, let alone pry subscriptions from. The *Daily Globe* and the *Evening Telegram* were in the field but running far back, while the *Morning Call* was coming up strong. The *Democratic Press* that was to become Hearst's *Examiner* many years later and the *Dramatic Chronicle* had not yet been born. The *Evening Pathfinder & Post*, *Evening Journal* and *Daily California Chronicle* had given up the ghost, and the *Daily Evening Argus*, once already dead, had dug itself out of a well-pounded grave and was making another feeble try to breathe.

All these newspapers were on a trial and error basis, and the expert from New York who had raised a great journal from nothing to top power in competitive New York City must have sympathized greatly with the frantically contesting editors of the little Western city. He found they already had an interesting history, soiled slightly with spilled blood, but not all in violation of the principles of individual enterprise or even those of good will and conciliation.

The battle for a few dollars to keep them running never ended for the editors, who for year after year considered advertisements of greater value than news. It took the Civil War to bring news onto Page One. But advertisements, too, had a history of their own.

They started out in the ragged little city with hardly the finesse of the present-day psychological approaches. One of the very first advertisements printed in the city (March, 1848, *Californian*) was by a baker who used the startling appeal of abuse:

"George Denecke respectfully informs the public that he carries on the baking business in all branches, and believes if others will mind their own business they will have a chance of doing full as well as himself."

There was not too much cash around and considerable business had to be done by barter, so one man advertised for workmen to build him an adobe fence, the payment to be "cattle or 200 wild mares, valued at between 1000 and 1500 dollars." The gambling instinct, so prevalent in the rugged times, naturally went into methods of getting something for nothing. Lottery advertisements, most of them featuring gold ingots at various values, began not only to aid the weakening finances of the publishers but to excite the town. When one raffle was finally drawn the American Theater was so crowded that hundreds were forced to stay in the street and have the drawn numbers relayed to them by a series of megaphones. There was, of course, heavy revenue to those operating the raffles and they were generous with handing out space to the newspapers. "The Mammoth Ingot of Gold Raffle at Duncan's Chinese Sales-rooms" resulted in the *Herald* alone getting 77 inches at a goodly price of \$3 per inch. Mr. Duncan announced he was raffling 2,400 prizes, valued at \$65,000. The first prize was, as usual, an ingot of gold, this one with "a stamped value of \$5,000 at the U. S. Assay

office." The rest of the stuff was what anyone would find in a Chinese store: jewelry, vases, pictures, even Chinese puzzles. Each ticket was \$1.

Mr. Vincent G. Chandler won the gold brick as the raffling went on in the theater, and it apparently was a legitimate performance, for Chandler was a woodcutter who could well use the money he might gain through its sale. The raffle was so lucrative, that others got the idea. The one that followed Duncan's affair was the lottery of one million acres in the Mendocino wilds—tickets \$5. But after some advertising, the scheme disappeared from the newspapers, and whatever happened to it probably was hidden in the dust of a promoter making a fast getaway.

Then came the poets in advertising. As early as 1856, the *Bulletin* took money for this, entitled, "Song for Autumn":

*They're all my fancy painted them  
They're lovely, they're sublime.  
I never saw anything so sweet  
As these new shoes of mine.  
They make my feet look so genteel  
That I am quite surprised;  
They're surely gems in shape of shoes  
That should be immortalized.*

All this in behalf of the H&D Boot, for sale at the Bon Ton Department Store in appropriate sizes for feet and pocketbooks.

Something real and lasting and worth quite a few dollars a column-inch also brightened the *Bulletin* the same year:

*Let the soldier seek fame in the din of battle,  
And the lover find joy in his mistress' dark eyes;  
Let parents find joy in their firstborn's prattle,  
Or poets in rapture praise Italy's skies;  
I'll take for my theme no such subjects  
As war; love or babies have no charms for me;  
I sing not of cries, maidens sighs, or blood-spilling,  
But I'll sing of the joys of a good cup of tea.*

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*Let such as would guard against sickness or sorrow,  
Go at once to the Chima Tea Company's store;  
If you can't go today, be sure to go tomorrow;  
It's on Clay Street, the number two hundred and four.  
The teas always being of the latest importation,  
Are warranted fresh as a rosebud in May,  
And the best that ever grew in the Great China nation;  
So ladies, read this, and then try it, I pray.*

When the Fourth of July came around, the *Wide West* used a parody on a poem already widely known:

*Lives there a man, with taste so dead,  
Who never to himself hath said,  
This hat of mine is shocking bad;  
Another new one must be had.*

*If such there be, Oh! let him come  
To the Pioneer Hat Emporium.  
And see the stock that is on hand,  
The best assortment in the land.*

No one saw any humor in this, as there was none. Suddenly, editors became dignified and advertisements the same. Small wooden cuts of articles for sale began to be inserted in the paid copy. Then the display advertisement took its present-day form, a quick evolution, only improved by better art work.

## CHAPTER XVI

# Speaking Out, But Timidly

THE hints of a coming battle for emancipation of the Negro may have had some weight in pushing two other domestic slaves into making a small try for it too. A gallant pioneer woman chose San Francisco to take a fling at a first all-women journalistic flight. It was the *Hesperian* news magazine, apparently the idea of Mrs. A. M. Schultz, whose name is nailed to the staff as editress on the first issue of May 1, 1858. Underneath, in smaller type, was "Mrs. F. H. Day, Associate Editress."

Of Mrs. Schultz there is small record. She appears in no directories of the day, and newspapers make no mention of her. Her editresship was short lived. By the third issue, Mrs. Day had taken over. She was a brilliant young matron, wife of Franklin H. Day, assayer for the gold refinery of Kellogg, Hewston & Company. The office of the *Hesperian* was in Mrs. Day's home.

Tightly restricted women, with their dresses dragging along the muddy streets, were speaking out, but timidly. They began with an apology: "There is no desire to plant the germ of ambition in the female breast, less in its too vigorous growth it uproot the tenderer fibres of domestic virtues and man's 'garden' again become 'a wild.'

"Her home is at once her Eden and her empire, and we would not tempt her to forsake that holy province for the untried fields of fame. To be womanly is woman's sweetest charm, and should be her highest aim. We cannot go with her to the ballot box nor the counting room; but if there be a 'vacant chair' in the household, we would sit there; or a 'dead lamb,' we would whisper soothing words; or if a sentiment or an inspiration should struggle for utterance at the portals of her soul, or if she may have gathered a gem from the mine of classical lore, let this little sheet present itself as not an unwelcome messenger to bear it forth to the world.

"Let her enlarge her apprehensions, let her cultivate her range of thought, through the improvement of those divine gifts which may fit her for the fulfillment of her noble destiny that each day she may add a new strain to the music of her march, and shed a softened and mellowed light upon the broad landscape of human life."

When Mrs. Day took over on her own, she had already time to feel the pressure of the disapproving annoyance of the males. Her first editorial was a call to arms:

"Courage in woman is thought by many of the fair sex to be so unfeminine that some fine ladies ever effect cowardice and pretend to be alarmed at the presence of a mouse in the corner or a cow in a ten-acre lot. But nothing is more absurd. Fear is often pardoned in women, but never admired. It has no connection with gentleness, or even gentility, and is the source of a vast deal of misery and discomfort. Let women cultivate courage."

The editress began whistling as she passed the graveyard, for the Fraser River gold excitement was on in the Northwest, and San Francisco was facing a serious financial crisis as thousands of its men rushed away looking for the gold they had not found in California. So little Mrs. Day wrote editorials telling the menfolk to stay home

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where they belonged and take care of their women. Times now being hard, she refused to break out a new issue until the first was off the stands and its advertisements were paid for. This was sound industry and, the exodus waning and business settling down again, Mrs. Day found she had a paying journal on her hands.

Next year, her news magazine, amidst the jars of pickles, jellies and needlework, won first prize for the best printing in the state. Of course, California already had a State Fair! Within a year, Mrs. Day's journal was forty-eight pages and had lithographs—in color. But after slaving four years and making her magazine one of the best in the West, Mrs. Day got the wanderfoot and sold to Mrs. E. T. Schenck. She said in her last issue:

"A beautiful smile is to the female countenance what the sunbeam is to the landscape. It embellishes an inferior face and redeems an ugly one. A smile, however, should not become habitual—insipidity is the result; nor should the mouth break into a smile all on one side, the other remaining passive and unmoved, for this imparts an air of deceit and grotesqueness to the face. Remember that men flatter beautiful women and admire intellectual women but useful women they love."

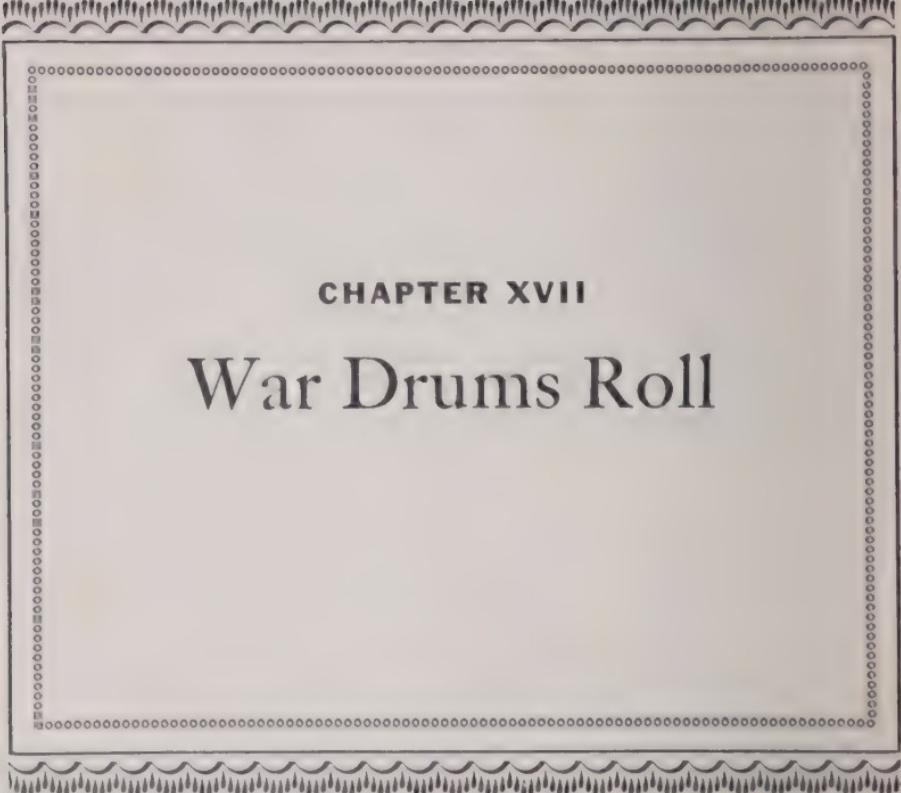
With that she went on her way.

Mrs. Schenck did not have the courage of Mrs. Day, nor her financial ability. Her husband, bookkeeper for a real-estate firm, had to work also as a watchman at the Mint to make ends meet. She was to find that tiny Mrs. Day was the magazine just as other owners were to find that Bret Harte was the *Overland*. Mrs. Schenck sold her sisters short. She invited the Reverend J. D. Strong to be associate editor. The Reverend Strong was pastor of the Spring Valley Presbyterian Church and was defensively masculine. He at once expanded his chest and flexed his muscles and Mrs. Schenck gave bad health as the reason and turned the journal over to him. He promptly "made changes."

There had been a striking cover on the *Hesperian*, the Dragon of Ignorance and the three maidens plucking the Golden Apple of Literature. This Reverend Strong changed to one of Presbyterian simplicity with chaste lettering in ornamented border. He swept out the last hairpin by renaming the magazine the *Pacific Monthly*.

His announcement of ownership said he did not believe in separation of the sexes "in literature any more than in schools or churches," so the magazine would now be of interest to all.

It was of interest to none, and the Reverend Strong went heavily into debt. In three months he sought and found a pair of weak little hands into which to drop his monthly. These belonged to Miss Lisle Lester, who took over without the courage to turn it back into a woman's magazine. She tried one campaign to have girls take gymnasium exercises—then folded the magazine. This left San Francisco without a monthly for three and a half years—until Bret Harte issued his *Overland*.



## CHAPTER XVII

# War Drums Roll

AS 1861 turned and headed toward national catastrophe, the city's editors faced a bewildering lack of serious interest in their readers. The arrival of the Pony Express only quickened wonderment that the public should so fail to comprehend the dispatches being rushed now in pouches for the *Alta*, *Bulletin* and *Sacramento Union*. National news was given full space and there were warning editorials. The *Alta* placed over its pony-carried dispatches a wood-cut of an Express rider, blasting on his trumpet as he rode, "News!" Yet it was not news to the careless public that felt tucked in securely behind the Rockies. Readers wanted fluff. The *Alta*, now known tolerantly as "Granny," gave them some.

The old lady fell in love with the police department. This was a most unusual amour. The police have ever been the whipping boys for newspapers, and to find a journal using columns to tell its un-



believing subscribers that the department was the most efficient in the world came near to being improper. Besides which it was a lie. Also the *Alta* editor wanted nothing. Apparently, he was merely indulging in the beaming happiness that was pervading the journalistic field just before the skies fell in.

Another editor spent several inches on his first page to tell about the masher who had attempted to help a woman (whom he did not know, by Gad!) across a street. "The offended beauty," said the report, "bestowed upon him a glance of superb contempt and indignation and swept on her way without honoring him with further notice."

It was with such piddling weeds that readers were fed as the war drums rolled and the tramp of heavy-soled boots was heard beyond the eastern horizon. Even as its editor waited echoes of the cannon, the *Alta* gave all available space on Page One to a burlesque raid and the tossing into jail of La Rachel, La Belle Winstaulie, Mlle. Felicia and Mlle. Marie Leonis. The girls, the palpitating public was informed, had appeared on a revolving platform in flesh-colored tights.

News of the firing on Fort Sumter came on the evening of April 24th—ten days old—and all the newspapers awakened as if struck on the soles of their feet by a billy. They fired up their furnaces and prepared to grind out some serious business. The *Bulletin* said atop the editorials:

"Rubicon crossed. The great news reached us at a moment when we were required to stop the presses."

On the opposite page—Three—the big dispatch appeared. It had twelve decks! The deck, of course, is a separate division of a head, pyramided in reverse. The big head, although only one column width, was to set the pace in head-writing for the years to come. The twelve decks, some of them one line, some as many as four, ran down for almost half the column before the reading matter began.

The *Alta's* extra, brought out in the late evening shortly after the *Bulletin's* editors screamed "Stop the presses!" had the story on Page One. The faithful *Alta* carried the Pony Express figure above the news and followed it with a head of four one-line decks and a summary head two inches deep.

The dispatch was, of course, the same in both newspapers. It was written in terse style, then new, with each short sentence set as a paragraph.

That night and the day following, with no more Pony Express riders coming into Sacramento where the telegraph reached, the city's papers had to be content with telling how the people took the news. There had been tremendous excitement. Mobs gathered before the newspaper offices as if they could in some mysterious manner conjure up more information. Only the *Bulletin* and the *Alta* had the news but the *Call* and the *Herald* (again reopened with new owners) stole it. They dropped the full dispatch into their papers just as if it had a right to be there. The *Bulletin* snorted: "These are dogs that feed on crumbs that fall from their master's table."

The day's editorials showed sincere regret. The *Alta* wept: "The people generally agree a great calamity has fallen on the land and that the great experiment of our government might end now after only eighty-five years of trial."

Said the *Bulletin*: "Too much prosperity has made the nation drunk. Exceeding wealth has corrupted the people. Alas! Their vain glory is destined to have a frightful fall. Resources we had to excess. Nature was beautiful—'only man was vile.' Left by our fathers in possession of the richest heritage in the universe—liberty unabridged, and a virgin continent for our home—we have hatred among brethren and now end by eagerly shedding each other's blood.

"If a more convincing depravity can be adduced from history than that now presented by the American States, we know not the age when it happened nor the page on which it is recorded. Better had the godlike Virginian fallen unhorsed on Braddock's field than lived to be the father of a country so disgraced."

The defeat at Bull Run was given the shock treatment. The *Bulletin* rushed it on Page One. The battle was fought on July 21, and San Francisco read about the disgraceful rout in the issues of August 3. The *Bulletin* blamed bad officership.

"Small lawyers, perfect gentlemen, good stump-speakers and tolerable wire-pullers at political meetings, were riding in the places where none but accomplished soldiers should have been."

It also gave a tongue-lashing to Congressmen who apparently went along for the ride as the badly disciplined army went forth to meet the oncoming Confederates. The paper accused the politicians of conferring with the officers as they rode into battle, and asked plaintively, "Were they of any service?"

The *Bulletin* produced in the August 9th editions two large, four-column maps showing the battle outline and disposition of troops. It was the first thing of its kind seen in the West, clear, fine sketches, excellently designed and accurately informative. The *Alta California* picked up the *Bulletin's* complaint about the poor officers, while the *Daily Morning Call* and the *Herald* offered sedate remarks about war being a serious business and that the nation's future depended upon our leaders being above reproach.

The *Alta* even complained about its own brethren:

"If we are about to go to war in earnest, impromptu brigadiers and parchment generals will have to stand aside; prying newspaper reporters will be forced from our camps; traitors and spies will be more thoroughly watched and peace and compromise men—traitors for the most part in disguise—will have to choose between death or exile and loyalty."

In October of the first year of the war, the dot and dash of the telegraph was heard in San Francisco from across the mountains and the desert and the Mississippi and beyond into New York. For months the lines had been a source of jewelry for the Indians from Fort Churchill to Fort Kearny, but recently the tribesmen had found wire a glut on their market and messages were getting through. Now the lines had been extended out of Churchill into Sacramento. The Pony Express was dead. The first private dispatch brought word of the death in battle of the city's most famous attorney, Colonel Edward Dickinson Baker, and every newspaper followed tradition and cried, "The silver tongue speaks no more!"

Baker had been with his intimate friend, Abe Lincoln, one of the "Long Nine" group in the Illinois Legislature. Lincoln named his second son Edward Dickinson Lincoln. "Handsome, sang a pleasant baritone, danced a graceful minuet, played the piano acceptably. Cultured, eloquent, a plumed knight," said his biographers. They

talked, too, of the "honeyed words" of his recent speeches, for the colorful fellow who played them close to his vest in high-stake poker and then afterwards tossed \$20 gold pieces to beggars, was a United States Senator. He had died leading a cavalry charge.

The San Francisco papers said Lincoln wept when he heard the news.

## CHAPTER XVIII

# The Pacific Republic Is a Bust

IN 1860 California gave Lincoln an ungenerous endorsement. He got 38,734 votes, but Douglas got 38,023 and Breckenridge 33,975. Even a writing man can work his abacus well enough to determine that while Republican Lincoln had a 711 plurality, the other two, both Democrats, had 71,998 votes. In other words, Lincoln won the state with a few more than one-third of the votes cast. That was political fortune, but it left the laurel resting over one ear.

All the estimable Federal patronage had for years been in the tight fists of men whose intentions toward the South were honorable. The State Legislature was Democratic. The Governor's loyalty was of questionable character, and most of the Congressmen from California were sweating down their wing collars crying frenzied words against their own government. General Albert Sidney Johnston, who died later fighting against the Union forces at Shiloh, was com-

mander-in-chief of the Western frontier having just relieved General H. W. Halleck. He controlled the big Benicia Arsenal, with headquarters at the San Francisco Presidio.

In 1859 the Democratic Legislature had passed an authorizing bill permitting division of the state, and now a local chapter of leaderless enthusiasts, this time called Knights of the Golden Circle, arose out of the night and held weekly drills. They wanted California, Oregon and Nevada re-formed into the Pacific Republic. The Circle's theoretical membership of 20,000 was supposed to arise at some sort of Paul Revere signal and take over the government buildings and forts around San Francisco. There were hints General Johnston was to lead the insurrection.

All this was a tingling tin-soldier game until the unled captains asked ex-sheriff Charles Doane to be their panjandrum. Doane was a Democrat and had been a marshal of the Vigilantes. In a back room with shades down, the committee from the Circle whispered in Doane's ear that several hundred men were organized in the city, armed, drilled and ready to answer his leadership. Doane looked discerning, promised a decision soon and went to the head of the militia. This officer told Fire Chief Dave Scannell, who issued orders for one thousand of his picked firemen to dig out their muskets and brass cannon and prepare to fall in on the morrow.

By the morrow there were no knights around. A half century later, Asbury Harpending, wealthy mine operator who had been one of the disappearing knights, told all to the press. He said General Johnston was not in on the deal, that he remained loyal to the North as long as he was in its uniform. One of the leading Golden Circle boys, Harpending said, was Edmond Randolph, spoiled, bad-tempered, ill-mannered member of the famous Southern family and an intimate of the General. Acting with his usual arrogance, the wilful Randolph approached Johnston, the pioneer told newsmen, and there were fireworks. Randolph came away in such a fit of the vapors that the innocent Harpending, then twenty years old, thought he had gone "stark crazy."

"He had," confided Harpending, "approached the General with some sort of a questionable proposition. Then he indulged in all

kinds of loose, unbridled talk. No amount of warning was able to silence his unbalanced tongue."

Young Randolph made such a noise that three selected knights went to the General for an explanation. The General was a polite man. He opened the door of the mansion at Black Point reservation with ceremony, ushered in the young men, seated them in a semi-circle in the parlor and then said:

"I have heard foolish talk of an attempt to be made to seize the strongholds under my charge. I will defend the property of the United States with every resource at my command and with the last drop of blood in my body. Tell that to all our Southern friends."

Then, with a bow from the waist and a sweep of his arm, the General waved them toward the door. The committee gathered the membership and told it the bad news, and, said Harpending, there was at once a new lack of snap and enthusiasm. A vote was taken on the honest question: "Shall we disband?" The vote was about unanimous—yes, suh, let's.

Harpending claimed he had put \$100,000 of his own money into the movement. "It was," he said, "an incident of financial recklessness of youth."

Harpending was twenty years old when he gave the \$100,000, every cent of which he had already made in promoting mines. When giving the interview in 1913, two years before his death, he was broke again, but before he died at the age of eighty he recouped and was able to will away a few hundred thousand dollars.

General Johnston's speech to the youths of the Golden Circle did not reach the ears of the President of the United States but other reports about him did. One day a steamer puffed through the Golden Gate and off its deck stepped General Edwin V. Sumner with a bagful of papers showing he was now in charge of the Western frontier command. Everyone was surprised except General Johnston who had been tipped by Washington friends that his successor was en route. He disclosed his resignation had long been in the hands of the government, and he made no secret that he was headed for below the Mason-Dixon line. General Sunner had been rushed aboard a steamer en route to Panama by a United States cutter after the ship had been out of New York for twenty-four hours.

Just why the General had been rushed out is not clear. Harpending, who was very close to the situation since he was trying to ruin it, said Badboy Randolph, angry because the General would not turn over to him the forts and arsenals, had written a letter to President Lincoln detailing what a rascal the General really was. The *Sacramento Bee* said years later its pioneer owner James McClatchy had learned Johnston was "at heart a traitor" and written a letter to Colonel Baker, already in uniform. Baker carried the message to Lincoln, who chased Sumner after the steamer.

Sumner, upon arrival, went into a drama of rushing soldiers from here to there. He called companies of volunteers from Oregon. They pounded their farmer feet into San Francisco, trigger-anxious and jumpy. California was now safe from the Southerners but not the rowdy Northern troopers who wanted really to shoot something. Troops were moved all over the state, wearing out their welcome very easily. Then, a few months having passed, General Sumner got tired of the business, cried for service and went east again, taking with him now most of the volunteers.

On the steamer that carried the General toward Panama was Dr. Gwin, just defeated for United States Senator after warming the seat for years. Gwin, old foe of the dead Broderick, had campaigned for the state to go out of the Union. He had lost the battle when the Republicans won. His departure was quiet. The *Bulletin* gave the full list of those leaving on the ship, adding:

"In the above list Dr. Gwin's name does not appear, yet we are assured that he was on board. Whence he goes and where we shall see him again does not appear."

The *Alta California* also directed attention to the fact the name was off the list, and remarked the doctor would not be missed too much. General Sumner waited until the ship neared Panama, then sent troopers to arrest him as he walked the deck. Gwin was permitted to go to his cabin. There he calmly threw his carpetbag, believed to contain numerous seditious documents, out a porthole. Although under guard, Gwin got word to friends at Balboa, and the United States Consul didn't get a siesta for several days as he fought their court writs on both sides of the Isthmus. It was claimed that Gwin not only was a political prisoner but had been

arrested in New Granadian waters. The soldiers and their prisoner just kept moving to the Atlantic side and another ship. And in far-away San Francisco the *Alta* chortled:

"The old fox is caged at last. It is ludicrous that old Gwin, with eyes wide open, should walk so deliberately into the lion's den."

When the passengers got to New York, Dr. Gwin was placed in Fort Lafayette. He was released before the war ended and went to Paris, there to become involved in the French attempt to seize Mexico. Years after he returned to the United States and was known to newspaper readers until his death in September of 1883 as the Duke de Gwin.

General Sumner's volunteers went into costly action and a lot of them did not return to the West. He commanded the right wing of Burnside at the unfortunate Fredericksburg attack and was yanked out of action. He died suddenly of pneumonia in 1863 and the candid *Alta* could only say: "If not standing intellectually in the front rank of military men, he was at least a hard-fighting and an earnest patriot."

On the whole California went through the Civil War with a few intramural riots and most of the noise was San Francisco editors belatedly roaring their patriotism.

## CHAPTER XIX

# For Sake of a Flying Machine

“**L**ITTLE Fred Marriott’s” *News Letter* started because its editor—in 1856—needed money to build a flying machine. Fourteen years before, in London, he held a patent for a steam-driven air contraption. No one there would back it financially, for in those days, also, those who had money bore it considerable affection. Marriott came to San Francisco seeking this money, found it not in the mines but in an idea: a tiny newspaper, printed on one side and shaped to be folded and sent to the folks back home as an envelope. It was similar to World War II V-Mail. It was just what it called itself.

It was so successful that within a few years the single page had grown to sixteen. Marriott continued to call it the *News Letter*. It became the city’s liveliest weekly, with the arrogant, rapier-witted Ambrose Bierce as its Town Crier. Marriott captured the services of the best Western journalists, but he was his own best ringmaster.

One year after Bell invented the telephone, Marriott had one connecting his office with his home on Russian Hill. Then, having the dollars cached away at last, he started to build a machine that would solve the centuries-old urge of man to get into the air and flit about.

In 1866 he incorporated the Aerial Steam Navigation Company and three years later had a United States patent on the Avitor. He was too European to sink all his own money into it and so sold stock at \$25 gold. Among the company directors were an Army general and Andrew Hallidie, inventor of the world-famous cable cars of San Francisco.

The Avitor did fly. On two days at Shellmound Park race track, July 3 and 4, 1869, several hundred witnessed the flights and news-men covered it for their papers. It was not an airplane, for little Fred Marriott had not discovered the aerofoil of the Wright Brothers. His was really an aeronat, a dirigible.

The first flight was a trial for the engineers. Then, on July 4th, one hundred guests gathered and cheered as they saw the flying machine stay in the air for a distance of more than a mile. No one was in it. The engineers guided it by ropes. It was shaped like a cigar—with wings. A framework below held a steam boiler and an engine. From one point of the “cigar” to the other was thirty-seven feet. It was eleven feet in diameter with an additional eight feet of wood and cane framework to hold the power generator. The wings were five feet long and came to points like those of a swallow. They were white cloth on a frame of heavy wire. At the rear was a rudder and elevator, four movable planes set at right angles. The steam boiler and engine weighed about eighty-four pounds. Spirit lamps were under the boilers. There was a crank connected by cog wheels with tumbling rods that in turn went to two four-foot-long propellers. The propellers were on the wings. There were 1,360 cubic feet of hydrogen in the “cigar.”

The flying machine, with bag inflated, continued to rest on the ground until steam whirled the props. Then it rose slowly and with props going about 100 revolutions per minute got up a speed of five miles per hour. With the attendants holding the ropes that operated the rudder and elevators, the Avitor made two trips around the race track and then landed and was bedded down.

The next day the bag was deflated and the machine taken to San

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Francisco and into the Mechanics' Pavilion where the annual fairs were held. There it was exhibited while the company sold stock and accepted a bid from Miller & Haley, engineers, to build a larger model—150 feet long with a carrying power of 2,500 pounds. It was to be operated by a crew of four. But after the excitement was over, the company found most of the pledges were no good, and it was able to sell only \$750 worth. The public did not believe Marriott when he said his flying machine would go over the Rockies to New York in about ten days. One day after the original model had been removed from the Pavilion, someone with a match got too near to it and there was an explosion—and the end of the Avitor. Marriott went back to making more money with his *News Letter* and gave up his childhood ambition to fly.

Meanwhile the transcontinental railroad, the real-estate boom and discovery of "coal oil" were in San Francisco's horoscope. When they came after the Civil War, San Francisco got a high fever. Easy money went to its head and soon it broke out in a rash of publications again. Some of them were robust and gutty, others dainty and given to simpering verse.

One of those with blood and sin all over the place was the *Police Gazette*, which always carried a modest explanation of its purpose woven into the eight-column vignette:

"A Weekly Chronicle of Crime, Comprising Murders, Burglaries, Forgeries, Larcenies, Riots, Incendiaries, Expositions, Assaults, Casualties, Divorces and General Police Items."

The *Gazette* was a full-size newspaper with sketches of all the best murderers. Occasionally it carried a fast piece of art work when a wonderful fire caused a few to leap and land, unlovely, in the street. When father shot mother because the star boarder had too much freedom about the house, or the little lady up the block broke her contract and stabbed her lover for failure to divorce his wife, the *Gazette* told all. It defended its attitude valiantly on these facts of living by declamation, with proper piety, that youth must be protected and the only safeguard for overcurious young people was exposure. This the young got through the *Police Gazette*, which also stood ready to denounce crime as payless.

On days when the real stuff was not at hand, Publisher F. S. Har-

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low threw in tasty crime fiction. Also there was a sword-and-velvet-trousers serial with intrigue in every line and the dainty title, "The Corset and the Crinoline." More ill-bred but just as luscious and as excitant was "The Perplexing Result of Getting into the Wrong Bed," and "How the Village Flower Fell and Faded." "The Beautiful Suicide or Tale of a Woman's Folly" was just what its title said. Most illustrations were captioned with virile: "Blast you! I'll have your life, you dog!" "It is my husband! Go by the window, and quickly!" "You have sinned, and I cannot forgive! Go!" "Aha! You were slow on the draw, my friend!"

Publisher Harlow led the field in sports coverage. His reports of fights were the best of the city. This was, of course, in the days of bare fists and the round ending only on a knockdown. The *Gazette* in 1867 produced a grand record of our great American roughneck age. It was its reporting of the bout between Soap McAlpin and Boss McElroy, apparently fought for the joy of it. The principals were not angry at any time during the bloody incident, which appears to have been to them another way of spending an idle Sunday afternoon. Soap was a semi-professional, however, having previously won his six regulated ring bouts. McElroy was just a tough guy, a hooligan who controlled Steuart Street where the crimps operated. The *Gazette's* sports editor was impressed with Boss because he "had engaged in many rough and tumble fights with sturdy lumber handlers on the waterfront and always came out first best." Whoever came out first best with San Francisco's stevedores on the lumber windjammers was better than a good man.

Word that the fight was coming off in a lot on the Embarcadero was shouted about. Both fighters had many friends, good sturdy mates who could lend a fist if necessary to prove it. After the gang had gathered the hat was passed and both men waited patiently to see if the take would be worth the effort. It would be winner take all. The hat was fairly heavy, so they stripped to their waists and got into the ring.

Each had handlers whose chief job was to drag principals upright after they had been knocked down. They had buckets of water, soon very foul, and dirty rags with which they cleared the blood out of their men's eyes and mouths. Sometimes when a principal was

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too groggy to stand up they slapped him with wet rags, snapping the ends on his skin savagely to sting him into renewed activity. There were some fair bets on the side which had to be protected loyally as long as possible.

The *Gazette* sports expert, doing a rather objective reporting job, said that as the first round opened the attitude of both men was that of great ease and self-reliance, "showing they were thoroughly up to their business. Each prettily applied his left as a feeler, while the right effectively guarded his body. Some long and graceful sparring ensued—first one and then the other trying to steal a march on his opponent.

"Soap was first to commence business by leading off with his left and with precision managed to reach the ribs and nob very effectively. Then, seizing his opponent by the neck, Soap threw himself backwards, pulling his opponent after him. They both fell, Soap on his back and McElroy coming down heavily on his head. This elicited considerable applause from Soap's friends, and 2 to 1 were offered on him with no takers.

"Round Two—McElroy comes up quick to the call of time, but is bleeding from the mouth and shows a 'mouse' under his right peeper. He immediately commenced action by lunging out heavily with a left which fell short, and Soap gets in good on his mug twice, but after receiving a couple of heavy ones on his ribs goes down, pulling Mac after him."

So it went on, round after round. During the seventh, McElroy came to scratch gamely and somewhat excitedly. The last two rounds had been in his favor and he had hopes of finishing the bout. To end the fight one must punish the other so severely that he could not arise after one minute's rest.

Said the *Gazette's* sports writer: "Mac immediately lunged out with his left and jumped forward with a bound that perfectly terrified Soap, who took to his heels, saying 'Legs, do your duty!' He was hotly pursued by Mac, who gave him a biff under the short rib that sent him to the grass."

Apparently Soap, the professional, was faking injury, for by the next round he is giving McElroy a general going over. The crowd

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was getting its money's worth. An hour of almost steady fighting had passed when the *Gazette* man wrote:

"Seventy-third round—Soap got on the ropes and Mac was giving it to him on the ribs when he goes down, holding on to Mac's neck and pulling him down on top; but he drew up both knees for Mac to fall on. Mac fell off the knees bleeding and panting like a stuck bullock."

At the *one-hundredth* round both men were in an appalling condition, and the crowd was screaming for the referee to stop the bout before both dropped dead. They stood there, hunched over, their arms loosely incapable of striking out. Mac was blind, his eyes beaten into balloons and his body from the hips up one mass of bruised flesh, hammered bloody by his opponent's bare knuckles. Soap was also covered with blood "as if he had been doused by a bucket of it from a slaughter house." He, too, was staggering around the place, almost blind, hardly knowing where his opponent was.

Under the rules of the game both men were in the hands of their seconds, who now refused to have their men quit. Both sides thought their man was about to win. The referee consulted with opposing seconds, then ordered the fighters back into the center of the ring.

They went six more rounds when the referee, calling time on the pugilists, found them unable to speak or see. Yet each was standing and willing to continue. The crowd was in such a frenzy that it was pressing in on the ropes and the corner posts were beginning to give. The referee, drawing on a friend or two to stand by to defend him, declared the bout a draw.

Seconds began to wrangle and threaten; spectators weaved about, screaming insults, waving fists. The referee's friends closed in about him, scowling, waiting staunchly for the first blows to come. A few fights started outside the ring, and there was a general melee. The *Gazette* man was very busy. He thought there were twenty knockouts, but admitted that under the confusing circumstances his count was necessarily hasty. By the end of the pleasant Sunday afternoon on the waterfront most of the spectators found they had enjoyed a full if somewhat tiring day.

Mac and Soap had battled for 106 rounds (or 106 knockdowns)

in one hour and 45 minutes. Held up by their seconds they came to the center of the ring and hung onto each other as they fumbled to shake hands.

Since it was a draw, they then split the purse. It was \$160, wrung from the generosity of the crowd that had gathered to while away a quiet few hours after church. Each fighter pocketed \$80 for the afternoon's athletic endeavor.

## CHAPTER XX

# A Borrowed Twenty-Dollar Gold Piece

IN JANUARY of 1865, seventeen-year-old Michael de Young, at the urging of his brother, Charles, twenty, asked his landlord for a few dollars with which to start a newspaper. Michael got a twenty-dollar gold piece and an admonition not to spend it all in one place and, more importantly, to return it within the week. From this small loan the de Young brothers started what in time became the *San Francisco Chronicle*, for the past fourscore years one of the most successful papers in the West. On January 17th, the *Daily Dramatic Chronicle*, a four-page tabloid, was placed by them free into all cafés, theaters, saloons and other public places.

Charles and Michael were unusually bright youngsters. Charles was already an expert printer and telegrapher; Michael was at the time both a sophomore in high school and a senior in grammar school, having decided to clean up both at once. This could be done

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then if a lad were ambitious enough to take one school in the day-time and the other at night. The gold slug from the pocket of Captain William C. Hinckley, from whom their mother rented a flat, was shown in an off-hand manner by Charles to a job printer, who at once produced two stands of worn type with cases, a stone, a battered redwood desk, one week's press work and some odds and ends of newsprint. Michael was finished with school.

The first issue of the *Daily Dramatic Chronicle* was not very stately. Two columns wide down the center of Page One was an advertisement of the local vaudeville house and there was much said about the Fairy Sisters, Sophie, Irene and Little Jennie Worrell, who were doing character dances, including A Screaming Farce, Songs and Finale to Conclude with Nondescript Fantastico Morceau of Absurdity Entitled the Grotto Nymph.

Upon turning Page One, a notice disclosed that Sophie had just gone through a most serious and embarrassing incident. During the Screaming Farce she had been bopped on the head by one of the Screaming Masked Fiends, who had carelessly put too much weight on the wrong end of a stuffed club while swatting the heroine. Miss Sophie, once down in the dewy grass of the Grotto entrance, failed to arise and it was discovered she was "*invisible*," a strange condition in which she remained for some distressing length of time. She had, however, recovered and the show, traditionally, would go on.

The official salutation, an opening statement that editors always made in No. 1, Vol. 1 in those days, came from the pens of very youthful editors.

"We make our politest bow with one hand upon the left side of our blue and green plaid waistcoat, one foot being thrown gracefully forward in the operatic managerial style, and our glistening new sombrero held negligently resting on our left hip bone. We incline smilingly toward our friends, the public, and announce our prospective intentions with regard to the *Daily Dramatic Chronicle*, asking them to take the tiller of our fate into their own hands, knowing as we do, that with such pilots the favoring breeze of success will fill our sails, and give us a clear sea.

"We shall do our utmost to enlighten mankind in *esse*, and San Francisco in *posse*, of actions, intentions, sayings, doings, move-

ments, successes, failures, oddities, peculiarities, and speculations, of 'us poor mortals here below.'

"The *Chronicle* will find its way every morning, in all the restaurants, saloons, hotels, reading rooms, stores, boats, cars, among the large private residences, making it the best advertising medium on the Pacific Coast."

In one month it gathered a circulation of 2,000—and Mark Twain. Also a dozen of assorted drifters whose noses always led them to wherever printers' ink could be breathed. The circulation was gained by hard work; Twain just came in and sat down to scribble his weekly letter to the *Carson City Appeal* and swap gab with Tremenhere Lanyon Johns, erratic, whiskey-conscious drama critic. Mark wrote squibs and articles in exchange for desk space. While Johns was never the man Twain was, he had one thing on him—the de Youngs paid him a salary (small). Twain never got a cent or a now much-missed byline from the *Chronicle*. Timid Bret Harte, a clerk at the Mint who hoped to break into the writing business, wrote articles for the paper on the sly.

"Often," wrote Michael de Young later in his private notes, "I've seen Harte open the door just wide enough to slip in a handful of copy and run before anyone could see him. He just didn't want anyone to know he was connected with us."

"When Mark worked for us he had the bad habit of lifting his elbow too high on numerous occasions. He used to get on late night sprees. He was noted for that and, like a good Bohemian, he ran up bills and owed money right and left."

"When Sam returned from the Sandwich Islands and was to lecture, he still owed money all over the place and the sheriff plastered the box office. Sam rushed to me and I told him to lecture under my auspices—and then he couldn't be attached—for I would give him his money at only \$5 a week for a year. You see it cost \$15 a week in those days to attach anyone's salary, and there was no profit in paying a \$15 attachment fee to get the \$5 he had coming from me. So we did it that way; and it was officially announced in the *Chronicle* that way."

"There were all sorts of Bohemians who made our office headquarters where they could borrow \$5 when broke. We couldn't

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pay them their worth, but our office made a place for them to smoke and chew, talk and tell jokes. The publication of squibs of these bright pens attracted much attention to the *Chronicle*.

"My brother set type. I used to set up the forms and work the press. We both did the folding and mailing. I also used to cry them. All this to keep expenses down. We were already planning a regular newspaper with a paid subscription, and watched our money. Brother Charles, because he was a few months older, drew \$15 a week. I got \$10. All the rest went into the bank—and stayed there."

They had the instinct to save money because in the past the family had been fairly well-to-do, and once the taste for money is acquired it does not leave the mouth for a long time. Father Meichel de Young, Esq., was a tortoise-shell and silver-jewelry manufacturer and bank director in the eighteen-thirties in St. Louis. Then, according to de Young's notes again, when President Jackson killed the National Bank Act, times became so tough that mobs went around looking for bankers to lynch. Meichel de Young escaped violence but the family fortune had melted in the heat of the times. So the father decided to go west. As the family went down the Mississippi, de Young suffered a stroke.

"We took on a doctor at Memphis and bled father," wrote the son many years afterward. "Before we reached Vicksburg, father was dead."

The family, under the capable guidance of Mrs. de Young, got to San Francisco by boat in 1854. Some of Meichel's merchandise finally caught up with them there. But the boys were very young and the mother was busy sewing for a living, and so the goods were auctioned. When this money gave out, Charles, the eldest, went to work.

The years went along and finally the boys got their tiny theater-handbill newspaper going. It was making a few dollars when the famous Matilda Heron came to play Camille at Tom Maguire's Opera House. Miss Heron was no longer young and with her matronly 200 pounds was not noticeably consumptive. Drama Critic Tremenhere Johns did the show and came back to the small *Chronicle* office and sat down to think out his review. He had, as

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usual, several full and satisfying pulls at a jug, then got down to the annoying business of writing.

"Johns, after drinking his usual bottle," said Michael de Young's notes, "wrote a most fearful criticism. He was willing to concede she was a *great* star since she had size, figure and weight, but it was an imposition on an honest critic to force him to fit her into the role of the fragile and consumptive Camille.

"That commenced the feud that made us. It was a *fight!*"

It was more than a fight. It was to be a twenty-years' war.

When Critic Johns' unpleasant review was published, Miss Heron sat in her dressing room under the stage and wept. Through her keening she vowed she had never been so insulted in her life. She pounded the walls lustily and called upon the gods to witness that sacrilegious offense had been offered her art. Never again would she tread the boards of Maguire's if Johns or the despicable de Youngs were allowed inside. Tom Maguire, impresario, who had a contract with the infant *Chronicle* to publish his programs, ordered the newspaper off the premises and the boys and their drama critic with it.

Maguire, a small man, called himself Napoleon of the Theater. This remarkable character, better than anything he ever produced on the stage, had been first a New York hackman, later had advanced to bartender. That his second job was in a theater saloon was the making of Tom Maguire, for while he never learned to read or write, he found himself "of the theater." He was as unrestrained as he appeared. During a fair but rough-and-tumble, kicking-and-biting fight with a hoodlum in a Bowery joint, Maguire won "Little Em," whom he later (a few years only) took to wife. The two came to San Francisco where a good tough man could make a fair living in the roughcast amusement world.

Before leaving New York he sold his saloon interest and the proceeds were in a fat belt around the top of his drawers when he reached San Francisco. He built a ragged little theater and opened it to big crowds who spent more time watching roulette balls roll than hearing actors rant. Promptly, however, in loyal support of the happy-go-lucky spirit of so many pioneer buildings, the theater burned to the ground. Maguire had cleaned up, and at once built a

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larger building, this time of imported Australian stone. This one he sold for \$200,000 to the city which had, after one of the constant citywide fires, no place to lay its official head. With his fine carpet-bag of city tax funds, Maguire erected his famous opera house and made Junius Brutus Booth, Jr., manager. Eventually he brought to San Francisco the whole Booth family, except John Wilkes, who had been permanently delayed by a certain desperate job in Washington, D. C.

Maguire had a chain—Sacramento, Stockton, Sonora, Marysville and Virginia City. He was rich, popular, lucky, happy. Then he threw the de Young boys out of his theater.

"So," said Michael H. de Young, "we had *at* him. We published a story, which was true, that it was unsafe for a respectable lady to sit in the dress circle of Maguire's for fear one of the demi-mondes living with the gamblers next door would come and sit by her. All the gamblers and their mistresses had full run of the house. Maguire had us arrested for libel. We beat him at the preliminary examination, so we next told that the immorality behind the stage was something fearful.

"No actress, whether star or otherwise, we said, could appear there without being assaulted, drugged and outraged right behind the stage. After Maguire had done staying with her, she was turned over to his stage manager. These women were outraged by the attaches of the house and there was such rivalry for their favors that a great many personal encounters resulted on and under the stage.

"We always took advantage of these things and wrote them up, denouncing the whole moral atmosphere of the house. At first the effect was nil but in time it began to work."

It began to work because fortune of circumstances played with the de Youngs. The Metropolitan Theater, the big rival of Maguire's whose advertising the de Youngs now controlled, had a minor fire. This propitious event proffered the *Chronicle* an opportunity to make a boisterous hint that Maguire, while not a true pyromaniac, did like to see the fire laddies run with the hose pumps. This could hardly be called bashful journalism, and Maguire had the boys arrested for libel. The townfolk were already enjoying the feud and a

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jury brought in a snappy acquittal. Now the de Youngs were becoming irritated and Maguire was really beginning to warm up.

The young men did the better shooting. Maguire, having lived longer, was a larger target. His private life was one of those open books easily, and interestingly, read. The de Youngs put on a serious campaign of exposé. They disclosed Maguire was not a person to be held up as an example to the young. And as the battle progressed, they discovered that their enemy, who still had a large chain of theaters, had spread himself too thin. Times were not good and when each link of a chain loses money, even if only a little, the addition can be tragic. At this disclosure, the de Youngs decided to swing the finishing punch—construction of a new theater that would outdo Maguire's. It was the forecast of things to come for the Napoleon of the Theater, who closed most of his theaters and placed his back to his San Francisco playhouse for the showdown.

The de Youngs called again upon Landlord Hinckley, who owned a parcel of downtown land, a model site, they said, for a fine theater. The captain, who had got his \$20 gold piece back within the week in which it was loaned, was willing that a rumor be started saying that unnamed capitalists were about to lease his property for a grand new opera house.

"This was done," wrote Michael de Young, "to get the sentiment in the right direction."

Octavian Hoogs, real-estate broker, rushed in and took a lease on the property. ("Such," said the de Young notes, "is the power of public opinion.") Octavian, undoubtedly a brave Roman, got the noted W. C. Ralston and others of the silver millions together. They took a twenty-five-year lease on the Hinckley property at a rental of \$1,000 a month, with an option to buy.

"We at once stopped our articles on Maguire," said de Young. "We had won."

They had. Maguire sold out. But the de Youngs were not finished with him.

"We demanded," they wrote, "that Maguire never be permitted to enter the doors of the new theater. It should never be leased to him. We announced if the lessors ever allowed Tom to put a finger

on the new theater we would do our best to ruin it—as we had him.

"When John McCullough and Laurence Barrett got the lease, the agreement about Tom went into it. Tom died a pauper."

But for twenty years after Maguire went back to New York City and tried to recoup and failed and tried again and again, the *Chronicle* watched and commented—until his death.

It was not, of course, only the battle with Maguire that made the *Chronicle*. San Francisco was a city that liked a quarrel and loved a fight and favored an aggressor, but three months after the tiny paper started the boys scooped the city so badly that it hurt rivals 'way down deep. Newspapers in the city knew little about extras. They just never used them. And the morning papers were out and their shops asleep when Michael came sauntering downtown on the morning of April 15, 1865. He knew General H. W. Carpenter, manager of the telegraph company, and often dropped in to chat. The *Chronicle* was not rich enough to afford many dispatches, but the boys liked to hear the telegraph tick, particularly Charles who had learned the code.

Michael walked into the office and there was the General, much excited. He said:

"Have you heard the news?"

"No," said de Young, ears sticking out.

"Lincoln," said Carpenter, "has been assassinated."

"Then," wrote de Young later, "he showed me the dispatch. I memorized it. I ran to our office, had it set in type and sent out extras all over the city. The *Chronicle* was a give-away at the time, but some of the editions brought as much as a dollar each."

The earnest student who had attended both grammar and high school at the same time had certainly learned to concentrate, for he had picked up the Associated Press dispatch almost word for word. Examination now of the *Chronicle's* report and its rivals' discloses that the wording is almost exact. But the *Chronicle* printed it hours before the opposition.

True, the story was placed inside on Page Two, but, after all, the advertisements—for which the boys were being paid—had a clear right to Page One. Atop the "dispatch" was a one-column sketch of the President. Then came:

First Dispatch:

General H. W. Carpenter: His Excellency President Lincoln was assassinated at the theater tonight.

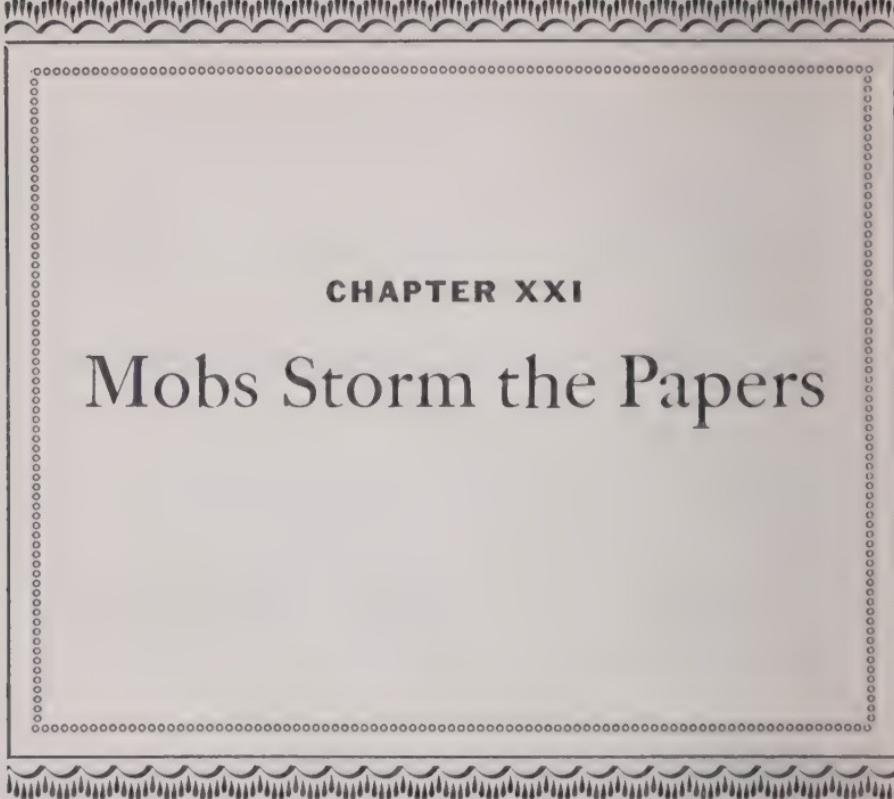
Second Dispatch:

President Lincoln died at 8:30 this morning, and Secretary Seward a few minutes past 9.

Third Dispatch:

Reports are contradictory. It is reported that President died at 7:22.

Then followed several hundred words of detail. There were three different extras, during the printing and distribution of which the afternoon papers did not catch up. And as the afternoon wore on, the *Chronicle* carried a running account of how the city was reacting to the news. Mobs were forming; and Michael de Young went out with a pad and pencil to see what they were up to.



## CHAPTER XXI

# Mobs Storm the Papers

WHEN the assassination extras first broke, the news spread rapidly. The de Youngs had boys crying the papers about the streets and soon the crowds were downtown. Small groups gathered before the different newspapers, awaiting further word. The morning papers did not bother to republish, since they had completed their work hours before the news came. The afternoons came out at their traditional time, early evening. So there was little for the crowds to do except congregate and repeat the word with sagely forlorn emphasis.

A man came along, however, and placed a wooden box near the office of the *Democratic Press*, a small journal that had been, when it started in 1863, mildly Southern in sympathies. This man was Warren C. Butler, a foreman in the Mint, a staunch party man. He

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made a short speech, detailing how the *Press* had been unjust to Lincoln during the war. As he stepped down, David Arrowsmith, a disappointed politician, recently ousted from his job of State Gauger of Liquors, took the box. He spoke well. He, too, said the *Press* had been disloyal. He took many hundred words to say it. Then Lawyer Daniel J. Murphy took the stand. He named the disloyal editors all over town in a spellbinding talk. These three men had not come there together. They had no political affiliation; as far as the later records showed they were not even friends. Yet now they had become leaders of a mob. They had it on the wing. Someone shouted the inevitable, "Down with the traitors!"

The mob turned as if suddenly remembering a job long undone and started toward the *Press* to kick the stuffing out of it. Up the stairs went four men to the second floor where the editorial office was. It was empty, so the four took their time throwing type on the floor. Cases and desks and files were dragged to the windows and tossed into the street. As each article landed and burst the mob gave three cheers. It was a deliberately slow job and called for much applause.

Police were notified by a stranger who went into the Hall and said a fuss was going on up the street. Police Chief Burke was much annoyed by the stranger. There was always a fuss going on somewhere in San Francisco. But when the second stranger came in and said it was a mob and that furniture was being hurled from a second-story window, Chief Burke took his feet off the desk. There was no communication system (aside from pounding on a lamp post with a night stick), so it took a long time to gather reserve policemen. Also it appeared to be a musket-toting job and the key to the armory was in another fellow's pocket. By the time Chief Burke and his trusty men arrived at the *Press* office, the mob had moved on and the building was gutted.

Around the corner on Clay Street the crowd was now at work at the office of the *News Letter* of British Fred Marriott, the idea of destruction having spread into full flower. This weekly had been a timid offender, grinning cheerfully when greedy England got a few tons of contraband food through the Union blockade. Furniture was

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being cast out the window amidst the cheers. The job, however, was far from completed when Burke and fifty men showed up and shooed the mob away.

The next stop was before the *Monitor*, a religious weekly, still the leader in its field in San Francisco. Just why the crowd should be aroused about this newspaper is not entirely clear. It had no record of anti-Unionism, but its furniture was smashed. The French weekly *L'Union Franco Americaine* was, unluckily, in the same building. It took the main weight of the attack and went down to oblivion, never to rise again. The wrecking was complete; every article not screwed to the floor went into the street in a splintered heap.

While the *Monitor* and *L'Union* were undergoing mayhem, an offshoot of the mob, timid and bashful, slipped into the next office. Here were no defenders and the little band of camp followers had a party, breaking presses, desks, type cases and even tearing up a strip of carpet. This was the poor little *Voz de Mejico*, staunchly pro-Union and pro-Lincoln. On the same floor and in the rear where rents were cheaper was another office that went the way of all undefended newspaper domains. It was that of the innocent *Irish News*. The poor little *News* and *Voz* could not recover from the financial loss and never published again.

The main body of the wreckers had worked the *L'Union* equipment down to a stump when the tardy police caught up. As the ax and hatchet boys moved on, however, the police stayed conveniently behind to make out official reports on the amount of damage.

This left the mob headed to the office of *L'Echo de Pacifique*, which turned out to be housed in the building where the large and pugnaciously pro-Union *Alta California* published. The *Alta* was not taking any fooling from a mob. Reporters broke up a few chairs and armed themselves with the legs and a few of them, having once been printers, tied hefty piles of type into bandanna handkerchiefs.

Editor MacCrellish opened a window and became very angry. He told the crowd that the first fellow up the stairs would be knocked back down with a busted head. Lawyer Murphy said it was not the intention of the crowd to molest the *Alta* office. It was *L'Echo* that had offended. Said Editor MacCrellish: "To get to the

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Echo office it is necessary to go through that of the *Alta*. We, up here, are not inclined to permit any one to pass through our editorial offices on such an errand. We suggest that you people go elsewhere, and hurriedly."

It was a nice, formal speech. The crowd went silent. Lawyer Murphy, Politician Arrowsmith and Federal Patriot Butler looked at each other. Nothing happened, and about this time—to the relief of all concerned—the police battalion showed up once more. The mob moved away, after, for no sensible reason, giving three cheers for the *Alta*.

The *Occidental* office was just far enough away for the mob to have time to mess it up before the police followed. There was not much loss; the *Occidental* was one of those shoestring deals. It was listed by rivals as "that weakly Copperhead sheet."

The police never did catch up with the crowd in this job, and so, unmolested, they went on toward bigger and better things: the *Bulletin*. This was, of course, a capable newspaper that also was not inclined toward outside interference. The spirit of the marchers was not equal to the task either. The *Bulletin* had been loyal. The crowd merely stood before the building. It was silent. Slowly, however, it grew larger and larger. Its size was danger in itself. Chief Burke called for the Army.

Major General Irvin McDowell, commandant of the Department of California, U.S.A., came out of his headquarters in Washington Street with his Provost Marshal Major Alfred Morton and walked solemnly and stiffly toward the *Bulletin* office. There he watched for a moment the reporters and printers preparing to meet an assault. He called for a packing box and mounted it. Major Morton roared the mob into attention. Said the General:

"Gentlemen: Your course today was very wrong but it was natural, and in interfering in the affairs of the press you have but anticipated me, and have perhaps saved some trouble. However, you must disperse at once. The Army will now take over."

He climbed off the box and ordered a general alarm sounded on the big fire bell atop the City Hall tower. The Militia answered. Patrols of principal streets were ordered. Many places of business, expecting further disorders, closed their doors. Saloons, reluctant

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as usual, padlocked the swinging portals. Two thousand regulars marched in from the Presidio that evening. The crowd had long previously broken up. Now the General seized the offices of all newspapers that had been molested by the mob.

"This is a protective measure," he told reporters, some of whom had come from offices that were now shambles.

The official general orders read: "Anyone who is so utterly infamous as to exult over assassination of the President will become virtually accessories after the fact, and will at once be arrested by any officer or Provost Marshal. Any paper so offending, or expressing any sympathy in any way whatever with the act will be at once seized and suppressed."

Wrecked newspapers unable to gather enough type from the muddy streets to publish a handbill were nevertheless suppressed. There was no process of law and martial law had not been declared.

Newspapers which had successfully passed the crisis showed the usual unbrotherly distaste for the vanquished. The *Californian* was facetious.

"We do not approve of mob law, and do not think that those who distributed type so rapidly on Saturday need be very desirous to let all the public know that they had a finger in 'pi.' "

Then the ill-mannered pun was followed by an equally bad bit of verse:

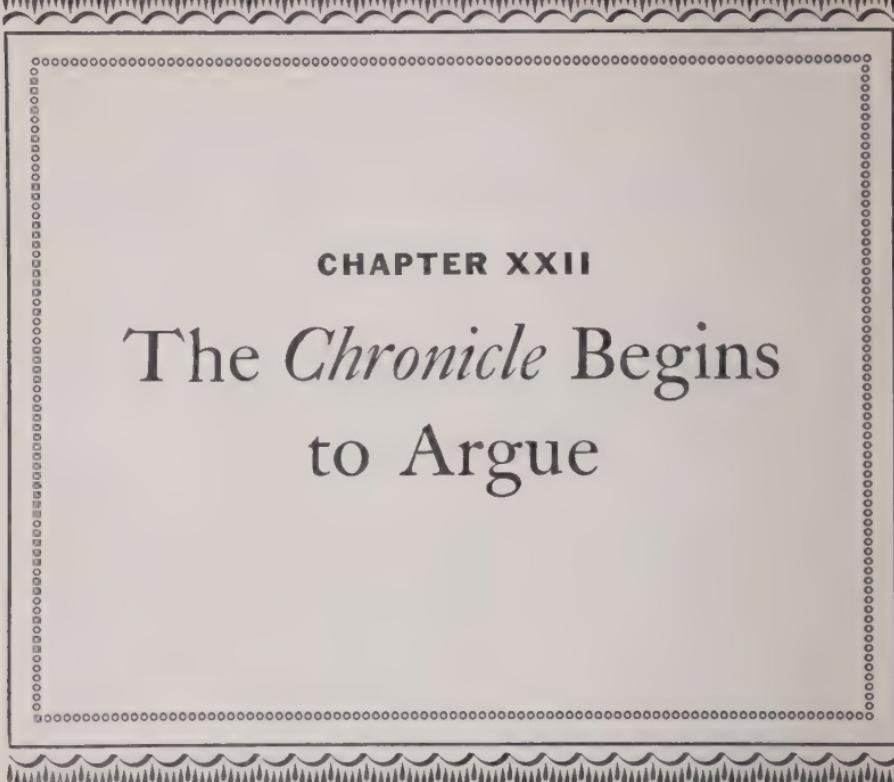
■

*Little Fred Marriott,  
Fly quickly! Tarry Not!  
Picking up News Letter pi!  
Stay not sucking your thumb,  
Lest a worst thing should come,  
And a noose let a Briton hang high!*

Marriott was not being laughed out of the situation at all. He went right back to publishing the *News Letter*, and it went on for another half century. He also filed suit for damages against the city, declaring the police lacked diligence and were cowardly in their slowness. He asked \$18,000. Three years later a decision was reached in the courts, and Marriott got \$4,813.28.

Editor Chanson of *L'Union Franco Americaine* sued for \$25,000

and got \$2,500; Jeffry Nunan of the *Irish News* took \$300 instead of his asked \$3,000; Editor Beriah Brown of the *Democratic Press* sought \$48,000 and had to be pleased with a \$10,000 judgment, and Editor T. A. Brady of the *Monitor* set his losses at \$13,499 and got \$4,208.



## CHAPTER XXII

# The *Chronicle* Begins to Argue

WHEN word got around that the de Youngs were about to make over their give-away *Dramatic Chronicle* into a daily morning newspaper of general circulation, Loring Pickering of the *Call* was worried. He had been watching the youngsters and recognized that they would be tough competition in his field. He at once offered to make them a present of a one-half interest in the *Call* in return for assurance they would kill off the *Chronicle*. The de Youngs said they were not in the business of making other persons' fortunes for them and declined the offer without thanks.

The de Youngs made their theatrical tabloid into a regular daily newspaper on Tuesday morning, September 1, 1868.

"We propose to publish what will prove a novelty in San Francisco journalism," their lead editorial said, ". . . a bold, bright, fearless and truly independent paper. We shall support no party, no cliques,

no factions. Neither the Republican party nor the Democratic party, nor the Pacific Railroad, nor the Bank of California, are great enough to frighten us or rich enough to buy us. We shall be independent in all things; neutral in nothing."

The previous December, in discussing the paper's future, they had published their creed:

"It is to strike back when struck, and to hit hardest. We admit that sometimes we become cruel. But as the festive season of the year approaches we are disposed to form good resolutions; we are tired of contending and want to lay aside our armor. We would like to be a model of high-toned Christian journalism."

The paper was now seven columns wide and of the regular depth of a full-blown paper. At once it opened its columns wide to news and features. It also had an evening edition, issued at 3 P.M., intended to go up-country by the slow transportation systems for distribution the next day. The claimed circulation was 8,000. The sign over the new office at Clay and Sansome, said, *Daily Morning and Evening Chronicle*.

Already the *Chronicle* had a London correspondent, the dynamic Anna Cora Mowatt Ritchie, whose byline was appearing within a month.

The de Youngs joyfully announced that they had to leave out five columns of advertising.

"We never borrowed a cent," said M. H. de Young, "for the change from theater handout to a daily newspaper. All of the financing was done from our savings in the bank. Neither of us was married. We lived at mother's home, which we took care of. We were making \$1,500 a month just before the change and we had put practically all of it away."

From the day it started, the *Chronicle* never passed a pay day. Even the good will of the *Dramatic Chronicle* had been sold to John Wight & Company, who renamed it, as agreed, the *Dramatic Review*. The "& Company" was the de Youngs, holding an interest in case the new *Chronicle* was a flop.

By the end of the first year, the *Chronicle* said its circulation was 16,000 and Pickering was childishly annoyed about its success. One day, he accused the de Youngs of stealing his dispatches.

“The *Chronicle’s* reply,” wrote de Young, “was a terrific one. We went through the early records of Pickering and Fitch and branded Pickering for having robbed his partner in the East, leaving and being followed on the plains and made to disgorge the money he had taken. We also accused Fitch of robbing the state government. Fitch was once State Printer, and when he made out his bill he used to charge double for Spanish typesetting and double for Spanish press work. In this way he robbed the state of thousands of dollars.

“Pickering met us the next day after this blast. It was to be the last interview ever held between the de Youngs and the Pickering-Fitch crowd. He said, ‘What do you mean by that savage onslaught yesterday?’

“We replied, ‘Mr. Pickering, we want you to understand for the first and last times that for every blow you ever give the *Chronicle*, you will get two back. Our courses will be separate from this time and our fight a bitter one, but you keep always in view that you cannot attack us with impunity and, boys though we be, we will fight you back every time.’

“We separated and have never spoken from that day to this.”

Pickering continued printing charges of news faking against the *Chronicle*. This piqued an odd sense of humor in the de Youngs. The *Bulletin*, afternoon paper of the Pickering-Fitch combination, set much of its first-run copy overnight. Late one evening when the editors were gone, M. H. de Young slipped quietly into the back room of the *Bulletin* and handed the foreman an advertisement:

“This paper called the *Chronicle*, published by the de Youngs, has in today’s issue a description of a prize fight in which our leading ministers are made to appear in the contest.”

The foreman had often received late-hour copy and so without paying further attention to it had the advertisement set and dropped into a form. It appeared in the first edition of the *Bulletin* next day.

“Of course,” said de Young later, “there was nothing about the ministers in our prize-fight story, but the *Bulletin’s* article sent everyone looking for a *Chronicle*. There they found a very good report of a real prize fight—and were naturally attracted to the *Chronicle*.”

While Economist Henry George was managing editor of the

*Chronicle*, James F. Bowman was retained as city editor, much against the real desires of both brothers. Bowman gave in, whenever urged, to old Demon Rum and was particularly sensitive to a slight impulse. The de Youngs had a sentimental attachment for Bowman as he had been a friend for many years, but there is a limit to all things, including sympathy. At last he was told to go, but to ease the departure, M. H. de Young gave him a fine gold watch. A few days later, M. H., walking down Kearny Street, saw the watch in a pawnshop. The thrifty young man redeemed it and carried it for many years.

Until September 6, 1872, San Francisco did not publish Monday morning editions. On that day the rivals had had enough of being scooped on Sunday by the de Youngs and began a seven-day operation. First, Charles had listened to railroad telegraphers gossiping about a great battle that had been fought in the Franco-Prussian War, and brought out a Sunday afternoon extra. He had followed it up with a fine series of war maps—drawn by a Prussian spy. Then Michael got word about a picnic train having gone off a trestle near by—and gathered his men and again scooped the town—casualty list and all.

"The game was up then," wrote Michael. "The extras caused so much attention we announced a Monday morning edition from then on to be given to our subscribers without extra cost. The result was all the morning papers had to follow suit and from that day to this San Francisco mornings have published for seven days."

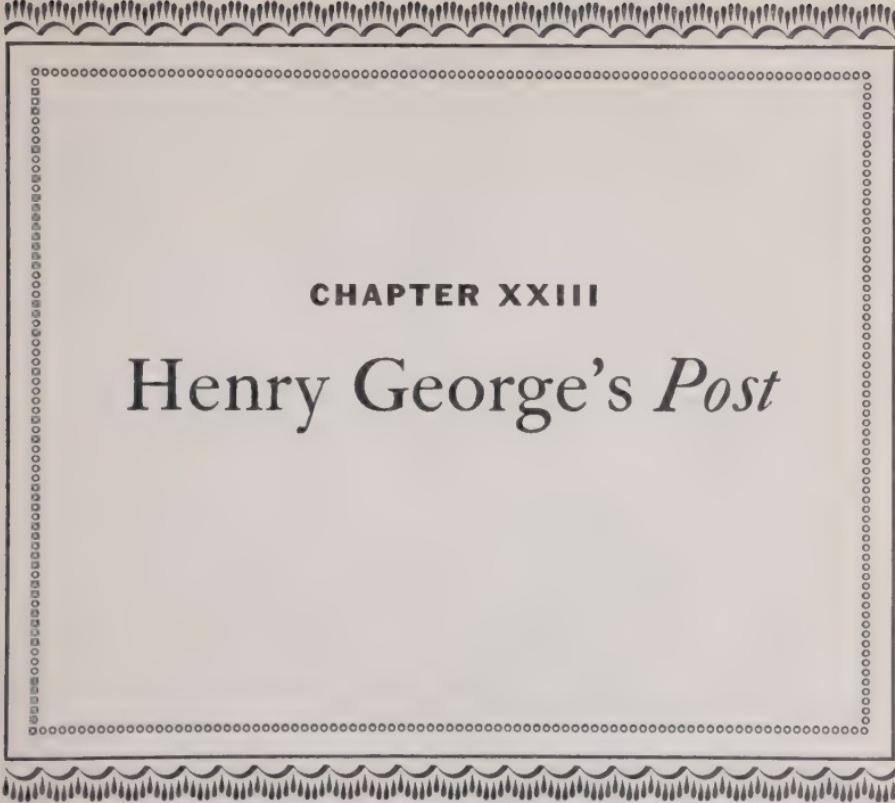
In April of 1870, the *Chronicle* ran a hefty editorial against a Senator Sherman who had been battling to continue the Federal Income Tax, the 5 percent taken during the Civil War. Said the editorial in part:

"A Federal Income Tax is unjust, undemocratic, illiberal, unwise and oppressive."

The de Youngs did not need to be told much about the psychology of public egotism. Before the door-to-door circulation drive opened they announced they would double their subscribers. In the first week they got 1,659. In forty-three days they got 12,258. When the three months were up they had gained 20,000—which

just did double their circulation. The gain was made by only one bit of astute psychology—publishing the name or address of every person who subscribed. You could get your name in the paper for fifteen cents, the cost of a week's subscription. At the end of the campaign, 1873, the de Youngs announced they were doing a gross business of a half million dollars.

The de Youngs, besides showing ability as good editorial and businessmen, were exuding courage. They needed it now. Their sturdy brand of individual journalism was beginning to bear fruit, sometimes of a sour and acrid flavor. Violence was becoming accepted around the *Chronicle* office as mere ruts in the unsmooth path of pioneer newspapering. The arrests for libel flourished. To be charged once a month with criminal libel was a fair average, and acquittals kept pace. San Francisco was not yet adult enough to take libel seriously. It had long enjoyed personal encounters and believed solidly in the theory that a few figurative punches were of no greater damage than a few literal punches on the nose. The de Young boys continued to take them as they came, sometimes being a little slow on the ducking. They were *both* toting pistols—and about to use them.



## CHAPTER XXIII

# Henry George's *Post*

MEANWHILE, another vital newspaper, the *Post*, popped into the field. It was owned by three printers and among them was that man Henry George, recently the *Chronicle's* managing editor and today known to the world as the author of *Progress and Poverty*.

Considered then as San Francisco's greatest radical, a reputation that many others have since snatched away from him, George had both his own poverty and progress there. After he left the city and became famous all his old enemies in the West wanted to claim him as a protege. Editors who had walked across the street when they saw him coming and who thought him a foolish fellow, improvident, a poor provider, suddenly became intimate advisers.

George was improvident. In 1865 he had to ask for money on the streets of San Francisco. At least so the story goes. George, in that year, was one of the great horde of unemployed printers. At this time

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also, taking no heed of time or stress or financial embarrassment, the stork dropped in. George walked the streets, learning first-hand the humiliation of no job and a sick wife at home. On sudden impulse, he stepped in front of a stranger and said:

"You must believe me. I'm a printer out of work. My wife is at home with a new baby—our second son. The doctor says she and the baby are starving—and if they don't get food they will die. I must have five dollars."

The stranger said: "You sort of impress me. Here's the five."

George later wrote that had the stranger refused him he might have killed him.

Just how he became an editor is now a matter of guesswork, for several claim this philanthropy.

Noah Brooks, editor of the *San Francisco Times* in 1868, wrote an article in *Century Magazine* in 1899, detailing just how he transformed the poor printer into a fine reporter. Brooks claimed that while he was editing the *Times* he received from his back-room foreman an excellent article about how Russia was extending her Asiatic frontier. Brooks was sure it was cribbed. He just didn't think, being an editorial man, that a printer could be that intelligent. The foreman vouched for the printer and Brooks published the article. It drew so much attention that Brooks had to go into the back room to meet the writer. There, he said, he was shocked to find the writer was such an insignificant midget that he had to stand on a lift to work the cases. (George was just five feet tall.) Brooks nevertheless offered George a chance as a reporter. This was just what George was honing for and he dropped his apron in a hurry.

George was made a third in command. Then Brooks fought the inevitable battle with his owners and resigned. His chief assistant quit with him—thus did Henry George suddenly become editor.

That is Noah Brooks' story. James H. Barry, who edited the famous vitriolic and two-fisted *Weekly Star* for a number of years around the turn of the century, said (after the Brooks article appeared) that Noah was a liar. Barry said it was James McClatchy, editor just before Brooks on the *Times*, who made the discovery that an outstanding slave was in the back room. McClatchy was the great pioneer newspaperman of Sacramento Valley. Barry backed

his claim with a letter from the son of George, who said his father told him it was McClatchy who offered him the chance. Not only that, said Henry George Jr., but McClatchy continued for many years as "his unostentatious patron and friend, the man who urged him to write this book which has immortalized his name—*Progress and Poverty*."

George had found his niche as *Times* editor and stuck there for a while, tasting the goodness of it all. But he had honor and integrity, and in a few weeks had joined the long ranks of the ex-editors of the *Times*. He said the policy was too restrictive, and well it might have been, for the owners did not know what they wanted or where they were going, except to follow where led by their advertisers. Before he walked out he was officially posted as managing editor and was getting \$50 a week, which was then much nearer a million dollars than it is today. It certainly was more than Henry George had seen up to that time, but with greater courage than most news-men he gave it up and went to the de Youngs and their *Chronicle*. Here again, he had that wonderful title of managing editor—but now it was without the wonderful \$50. In those early days, the de Youngs announced in a most friendly fashion that they paid most of their hired hands next to nothing and sometimes that to which they were next to. It is not surprising, then, that George, father of two children and with a tiny wife who had to take in sewing, quit the *Chronicle* after a few months and wandered into other newspaper jobs, none making him richer than the other.

While editor of the Sacramento *Reporter*, Henry George began to show first signs of being tough on the rich. He started a whooping campaign against the railroads, which had just got their big feet into the state. The railroad agent walked into the *Reporter* office one afternoon, asked to see the proprietor and walked out very shortly thereafter owner of the paper. But before leaving, he stepped into the cubicle where Editor George sat at a desk and ordered him f.o.b. sidewalk. This act is known to the present-day journalists as a commonplace, and has never gained the dignity of a disgrace.

George returned to San Francisco, and, disillusioned by one unwarranted discharge, decided to quit the business before he got permanently enmeshed in poverty. He promptly decided to become a

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state assemblyman, a much poorer paying job than newspapering. He wondered just how he was going to keep his family on the state salary and worried a great deal, right up to election day when the voters took his worries away from him. He got 10,775 votes—ran seventeenth!

In 1871, while waiting for something to turn up, he printed a forty-eight-page pamphlet, "Our Land and Land Policy." It contained the germ of the single-tax theory. It hardly made a ripple. Then he went into a deal with A. H. Rapp and W. M. Hinton to start the *Evening Post*. The newspaper bug had slipped him a deep fang when he wasn't looking. Rapp was a good printer. Hinton was the gullible one who made Bret Harte editor of his early falling *Star*.

On December 4, 1871, the first edition of the *Post* appeared. Its salutation said:

"Three printers, long residents in California, start this paper.

"They believe that there is in San Francisco a field for a bright, vigorous, honorable, really independent journal, which shall be at once cheap and good. It has been bruited about that the *Post* will be a Democratic paper. The truth is this: in the higher, wider senses of the term we are Democratic and the *Post* will be democratic—that is, it will oppose centralization and monopolies of all kinds.

"Paper is the most expensive item of making a newspaper. . . . Therefore, the size. We are able to print all four of our pages as one. We can afford to sell it for one-half cent a copy—our wholesale price."

The point, made so heavily by the founders, was that it was to sell retail for one cent a copy; by mail, twenty-five cents a month. It was, as indicated, a tabloid of five narrow columns. A prominent and black-type announcement published atop all four pages declared:

"Change is given by the newsboys."

This was important because San Francisco at the time—and now, for that matter—would have little to do with pennies. So, while the paper sold to wholesalers at one-half a cent, the newsboys made a good thing of it, since no one would bother to take change.

It was not a sensational paper, the heads being small and the writ-



ing dull. The three printers, moreover, were not a sodality as were the five who had started the *Call* years before. By April of 1872 the editorial note appeared:

"My editorial connection with the *Post* ceases with this issue.—  
Henry George."

The next day's issue announced: "At present the *Post* is in some sort of transition state, necessarily incident to the reorganization of the entire business and editorial departments, consequent upon the withdrawal from the firm of Messrs. Hinton, Rapp and George.

"As things stand now, I have bought out the partners—H. W. Thomson, Publisher and Proprietor."

By June 3rd, Thomson was out and the ownership was W. M. Hinton & Company. The "Company" part was apparently Henry George, for in a couple of days in a signed article under the flag, that gentleman said:

"I left the *Post* two months ago because under circumstances which had arisen I could not have maintained control of its columns. These circumstances have now changed, and I come back to it. The firm that has now purchased the *Post* is substantially the same one that started it."

The economist-printer was listed the next day as editor again. Under this was an announcement pleading with the readers to get their change from the newsboys, "who now have been supplied with pennies."

George did not bother with tax problems, single or double, while editing the *Post*. He had all he could do to keep a limping newspaper from falling on its face. By August of 1872, he had increased the size to six columns, making an eighteen-by-twenty-four-inch page and abandoning the tabloid idea entirely.

"The little *Post* (price, one cent)" he wrote, "is no more. In its stead we present the size and amount of matter that will compare favorably with any on the coast. It will be our aim to make the *Post* (price, two cents, or ten cents a week) a perfect paper."

By October the two-penny paper gave up its love for coppers: "We have been so successful that we have been compelled to enlarge. The *Post* will still be ten cents a week, but the price of the single copy goes to five cents.

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"We do this more to accommodate the price of currency than for the sake of the additional income.

"The time for the introduction of small coins in San Francisco has not come, and it is useless as yet to attempt to overcome the repugnance of the public to the penny.

"We have made the experiment pretty thoroughly, and now abandon it only when convinced that it cannot succeed."

The *Post* battled along for a few years, fitfully. In 1875, when it took a deeper financial-chart dip than usual, one of its editors took his hat in hand and called upon the rich Senator John P. Jones of Nevada. It could not have been George, for he was never on borrowing terms with capitalists. But Hinton or someone else got a fat loan, hoping to reinforce the *Evening Post* with a bulky Sunday supplement to be known as the *Ledger*—sketches and articles and serials about maidens being sought after by flashy males with evil desires. The city was not ready for such a clumsy newspaper. The de Youngs and the Fitches and the Pickerings were sagaciously increasing their newsprint output in tune with subscription increase. The *Ledger* made a spectacular entrance, followed by as dramatic a nose dive as was ever enjoyed by rivals. The *Post*, held by Senator Jones as collateral for his *Ledger* loan, was already up to its nostrils in debts. Now the *Ledger* began to suck it under. Senator Jones got fussy about all this; called his loan. The *Post* reached out for its lily and lay down alongside of the baby *Ledger*. Henry George was out of a job again.

He had, however, made a few political friends. Governor Irwin gave him the job of State Gas Meter Inspector. No one now seems to know just what this position was. Certainly George did not go about poking his small nose in the spider webs under the stairs and taking off the readings. Somewhere he says the job was a sinecure and that he was able to pay others to do the work. He was smarter than most, using his idle time, for which the taxpayers paid, to write a book that made him famous. It took a year and a half to write. When it was finished, in March of 1879, he sent it east hoping for a publisher. Harpers, Appletons and Scribners refused it. He set and printed it himself, 500 copies. He sent a copy to Appletons. In

print, it looked better. Appletons agreed to publish. They had a long-time best seller.

In 1860 he left San Francisco, never to return. He got so important that the groups advocating his new tax theory backed him for Mayor of New York. It was too much for his frail body.

## CHAPTER XXIV

# Derringer Troubles

NOW, as the seventies got under way, the little angry wasps of men were swarming again and the city was stridulous with malevolence. Mobs were yelling, "The Chinese must go!" Denis Kearney was on the make. His heavy, round voice was a monition to riots, fires, a new "vigilante" group, election scandals, shootings.

The de Youngs were in the midst of it early. They had become so powerful in the raging civic affairs that they now went armed, prepared to defend their editorial viewpoint with vigor. They were taking back talk from no one. Richard Sinton, a school director (and a partner of the ubiquitous Abia A. Selover), had charged the *Chronicle* with criminal libel. The case came before Judge Delos Lake, a jurist especially hated by the de Youngs. Judge Lake did not like the de Youngs either, for only recently the *Chronicle* had helped defeat him for re-election. The Judge had announced on that election night when the runners had brought the bad news to him:

“I will land those de Youngs in San Quentin yet!”

The Judge now had hopes of making good his boast, for it was a criminal case. He was still in office because in the election in which he had taken defeat the voters had increased the courts by one—and the friendly Mayor had appointed him to the new court.

“After our bitter attacks on Lake,” wrote M. H. de Young, “it was a mean trial. It was, in fact, one of the most remarkable cases ever tried in San Francisco. We declined to question the jurors, just let them come into the box. We accepted them as drawn. We knew we could prove our assertions. Judge Lake ruled out everything that came up in our favor. He evinced bitter feeling from the bench. He even interrogated the witnesses himself and suggested points to the prosecuting attorney. He could hardly be called a fair judge. But we fought him right down the line. The jury went out for ten minutes and came back and said, ‘Not guilty!’”

“We had called Sinton a bully and a blackguard and we had proved it. Judge Lake nearly fainted at the verdict.”

Lake’s new judgeship was a short-term one and soon it was time for re-election again. The *Chronicle* went at him with a will. It suggested Lawyer M. C. Blake as opposition candidate, and the Republican Party asked Blake to run. He accepted; and the de Youngs—up to now independent in politics—announced they would support him. The *Chronicle* thus became a Republican paper and has remained so for three-quarters of a century. Blake won by 2,000.

Lake’s term had a few weeks to run, and suddenly, once again, his heart was filled with glowing hope when on his calendar appeared one day the familiar notation: “Charles and M. H. de Young, libel.” This was about the tenth case of the year—all acquittals. Little attention was paid to the coming case by the busy de Youngs and their counsel. So, when the case was called, they had failed even to subpoena witnesses. The attorneys pleaded for time.

Said Judge Delos Lake, who now would be out of office in a couple of days: “No, you cannot have a continuance. Please proceed to trial.”

So the *Chronicle* went to trial without witnesses. The two brothers told their stories. They believed what they had said about the plaintiff and considered that the city had a right to know, through the press, preferably, what kind of man the plaintiff was.



The jury agreed. The de Youngs marched out with the familiar acquittal. Judge Lake sat in his chambers and brooded. An hour or so after the acquittal, the Judge came into the *Chronicle* office with blood in his eye, a revolver in his pocket and a heavy whalebone cane in his hand. He was told both owners were out. Lake went across the street, stood in a saloon doorway. Finally Charles de Young came down the street.

Lake rushed from the doorway, calling hard names, his cane held high over his head in both hands. He came like a charging executioner and Charles threw up his right arm and took the heavy stroke on it. The blow was so hard the cane shattered. De Young, his arm paralyzed, fought wildly with his left to parry the piece of cane which Lake was now using as a short sword. He rushed Lake, who threw away the cane and drew his pistol. De Young threw up his arms and yelled, "I am unarmed!" Then he rushed Lake and grabbed the Judge's gun arm and drew it over his shoulder, and the Judge went over with it. (Charles weighed 140 pounds; the Judge, 240.) But Charles was not fast enough to jump on Lake as he fell and they went into a clinch. Now the Judge crushed his weapon against de Young's temple and fired. The ball only grazed de Young's temple, but Attorney E. D. Wheeler, standing across the street in a building doorway, took it in the thigh. The crowd scattered, then cagily returned as it realized the gun was a single-shot.

About this time a substantial fellow went to find a policeman. No one else had given this a thought. Patrolman James Reilly was just around the corner. He got one leg of Lake and a spectator got the other and they unwound the man and slid him off his opponent.

Policeman Reilly took the Judge and de Young to the jailhouse to see Chief Patrick Crowley. Here Judge Lake opened a loud demonstration against his arrest. When the Police Chief could drive his voice through the roars, he asked plaintively if Lake wished to make a statement.

"Yes," yelled Judge Lake, "I'll be glad to make a statement. He drew a gun on me, or at least he made a motion toward his hip pocket as if he was going to draw one. So, I drew in self-defense. Yes, that is what it is: self-defense!"

"I never intended to shoot de Young. I was pounding him over the head with the pistol when it accidentally went off. I am sure it

was not cocked, and I am terribly surprised that a gun could be discharged in that fashion. It was self-defense, I tell you!"

Judge Lake demanded an immediate hearing and went before Judge James C. Pennie, presiding Justice of the Peace. Officer Reilly swore out an assault with a deadly weapon warrant. Into the hearing a tall fellow came running, demanding that everything be held up until he could look at the facts. He had some rights in the matter, since he was Henry H. Byrne, the District Attorney. He was also a political enemy of the de Youngs. Justice Pennie, knowing he was juggling a political hot potato, continued the case, set bail at \$1,000. Did anyone have \$1,000?

Said the District Attorney, who, under the usual laws of the nation, is supposed to be a prosecutor, "I am worth \$300,000. I will place the bond." But friends plucked at his sleeve and whispered bits of law, and the District Attorney withdrew his words—temporarily. Another friend placed the bond, and after the crowd had left, District Attorney Byrne slipped back into court and placed his name on the bond, too. He was just stubborn, and besides, the *Chronicle* had helped defeat him for re-election. He also had only a few days left in office.

At the preliminary hearing, Witness John McComb, former publisher of the defunct *Argus*, said de Young had made an effort to draw his pistol after Judge Lake drew his "large, silver, single-barreled, breech-loading derringer." When Charles de Young took the stand he admitted he had attempted to draw his pistol—but it was not in his pocket. It was the *one* day he had forgotten to carry it! Judge Lake told about self-defense. Experts quarreled, as usual, about hair-triggered derringers. The Justice of the Peace said he had to study the case more.

While the Justice of the Peace was pondering, Lake suddenly showed up in another courtroom on Saturday morning, December 30th, the last legal day of the year. Just a few days before the Grand Jury, wearying of inaction by the J. P., had brought a felony indictment against Lake. County Judge John A. Stanly mounted the bench and looked about curiously and asked his clerk if there was any business on this quiet morning. There was, said the clerk, the case of Delos Lake.

District Attorney Byrne was not available on this, his last day in



office. Judge Stanly sent for Daniel J. Murphy, the District Attorney Elect, who came pounding into court, finally.

"I am astonished, to put it mildly," said Mr. Murphy, "at the speed being shown here today. I know nothing of the facts of this case. I believe it highly irregular. I wish a continuance until next Tuesday."

Said Judge Stanly, "You can have no fears about this matter. It is highly regular and legal. We shall proceed, Gentlemen."

Lake then pleaded guilty to the original misdemeanor charge. (The Grand Jury indictment was nowhere in the files.) Judge Stanly made a short speech:

"There was very considerable provocation for the attack on Mr. de Young, but since Judge Lake was at the time in a position of much trust and honor and one that demanded a greater degree of control over his passions, I can not let him off easily. I therefore fine him \$300."

Lake, without a moment of decent hesitation, took from his wallet a check already written and signed. It was, strangely, made out for exactly \$300.

In February of 1874, the de Young-Benjamin F. Napthaly feud, that was to be one of the most famous in San Francisco history, bloomed into what rival newspapers called "offensive emanation." Years before, Napthaly, graduate of the State Reformatory, class of 1870, wandered into the *Chronicle* office, a dirty and shoeless lad. From cleaning the shop he graduated to part-time reporter. Then, accused of some mysterious treachery, he took fast departure from the office.

In a year, the rat-witted Napthaly and R. F. Fitzgerald got control of the old and sickly *Sun*. Fitzgerald had few honest qualifications as a publisher. The *Bulletin*, in reporting the wild two-man riots in later months, said about Fitzgerald:

"This representative member of the libelous press of San Francisco, on the showing made in court, has been characterized as a life insurance swindler, insurance charlatan, forger, bigamist, swindler of his bondsmen, defaulter, villain, law-breaker, insurance vampire, full of innate diabolism, contemptible scamp, horse thief, champion swindler. All of which Fitzgerald himself certifies to be correct."

But the open real fight between the *Sun* publishers and the *Chronicle* began in January of 1874, when an item entitled "Birds of a Feather," appeared in the *Chronicle*. It said, referring to claims that the *Sun* was blackmailing insurance companies to get advertisements out of them:

"Fitzgerald, the publisher, is by his own confession, a thief, a liar, a bigamist and, on general principles outside of the qualifications of his peculiar abilities, is a scoundrel."

"B. F. Napthaly, the nominal editor, is a graduate of the industrial school, a professional blackmailer, a hanger-on of the lowest gambling houses and dens of prostitution, and, generally, one of the most degraded specimens of hoodlumism."

The *Sun* replied next day. In its article was a vicious personal attack on the de Youngs. It was a low blow. Even in that day of careless and irresponsible journalism, copies of that *Sun* sold for \$2.50 each. The last copies were held by newsboys and rented for twenty-five cents an hour.

The de Youngs, hearing that the edition was to be repeated the next day, got out a warrant charging criminal libel. Before it was served, Gustavus de Young, a brother, a map publisher, found Fitzgerald leaning over a form in the *Sun* back room. He struck him a blow on the chin that knocked him across the room. De Young gave Fitzgerald a prolonged beating, leaving him unconscious.

Charles and M. H. de Young now showed up with police to serve the libel warrant. Gustavus had gone, but he was not needed. The de Youngs rushed the forms, scattered type all over the floor, broke up most of the equipment. Eleven printers—and an innocent visitor, a compositor from the *Alta*—were then pushed into a paddy wagon and taken to jail.

A police judge released the printers on \$1,000 bond, furnished by an optimistic bail-bond broker. The innocent *Alta* man, muttering vague threats, was let go with only \$100 bail. Why he was held at all, no one seemed to know or care. The printers returned to work. Suddenly the de Youngs were there again, Charles with a pistol. Police arrived. A great argument broke out, the de Youngs claiming the printers were again setting up the offensive article. So the printers took a second ride to jail. The bail was another \$1,000—and the printers said they were now going home.

The *Sun* failed to appear for many months.

Napthaly, also named in the libel warrant, kept hidden until Monday and then attempted to sneak into the courthouse and post bail. He approached a policeman, took his comfortable arm and asked to be run in. At this moment, Gustavus came up, drew a revolver and started firing. Napthaly ran for his life and Gus emptied his revolver after him—without luck.

Gustavus made no attempt to get away. The policeman took him in. While he was being booked, Charles and M. H. appeared. As they stood there arguing the matter with the police desk sergeant, Ben Napthaly, whose timing was extremely bad, walked in to surrender. M. H. de Young drew his revolver right there among the policemen, but was disarmed. The tardy police then searched everyone in the place. This produced a revolver on Charles. So: M. H. was charged with assault with a deadly weapon, Charles with carrying a concealed weapon and Gustavus with unwarrantedly shooting at a person in the street. Total bail, \$27,000. Napthaly, although offered bail by friends, announced he would rest inside a cell for a while.

A judge finally pushed the shooting part of the business on to the higher courts (where it was forgotten) and held Napthaly and Fitzgerald on the libel warrants. As for a libel action, demanded by Fitzgerald against the de Youngs, the judge said:

"This does not hold water. The character of that person (Fitzgerald) being so infamously bad, by his own admissions, he is not susceptible to damage by libel."

About five months later, the *Sun* started up again. It was quiet and orderly and slowly dying and hardly anyone knew it was there. Suddenly, it took a few pot shots at the de Young family. That was all Charles de Young was waiting for. He oiled up his derringer.

On the afternoon of June 15th, Ben Napthaly and his close friend who sold fish, Charles Weightman, were standing at Merchant and Montgomery Streets, talking. This is only one block from the Hall of Justice where policemen have their place of business. Charles de Young came up Montgomery Street, walking on his toes, and he was looking right at Napthaly. This the fish peddler saw. He nudged Napthaly and pointed.

It is a long block up Merchant Street but Napthaly made it in record time. Charles de Young had shorter legs and was handicapped

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by trying to keep on his tall white beaver hat. Besides, he was running and also attempting to get a shot at the fleeing man. Just when de Young thought he had a bead on Napthaly, he tripped on a cobble and sprawled flat. He jumped up and continued the chase, leaving behind his rolling beaver.

Napthaly made Dunbar Alley and skidded into it and from it dashed right into the rear door of the police station, where the pinochle players looked up from their game in annoyance. Napthaly did not bother to slacken his pace but ran through the building, shouting, "I am unarmed, and he is after me *again* with a pistol!"

With this he fled out the front door into Kearny Street. Right behind came de Young. He had, however, slowed to a walk. His pistol had been slipped back into his pocket. He looked around smartly for Napthaly, saw he was gone. Then he quietly sat down and watched the card game for a while, finally sauntering out and back to his office.

Napthaly and Charles de Young had at it once again the second day.

This time, Charles stood leaning against a temporary fence around the new Appraisers' Building, his face wrapped in a large brown worsted scarf. Although it was June, he was also wearing a heavy overcoat, its collar turned up. Napthaly, all unsuspecting, came out of the Post Office. As he passed the muffled figure, de Young fired and missed. Napthaly jumped back, drew his own pistol and fired—and the duel was on.

It was a scene that could only happen in a western city. Charles stood like a professional cowboy behind a lamp post carefully shooting at the jumping Napthaly, who was making erratic circles in the street, wildly and earnestly seeking cover. De Young got in four shots at the excited Benjamin with his five-shot Colt, and Napthaly got three at de Young with his English self-cocking revolver. Neither was hit, but a young girl, trying to make the doorway of a nearby store, fainted halfway there and lay on her face in the street. Other men and women scattered in all directions, several falling, but, unlike the girl with the vapors, getting up and away. And wee Henry Mitchell, Western Union messenger, who, of course, had a widowed mother, got a slug in the leg.

With young Mitchell down nursing a leg, the fainted girl lending

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atmosphere to the street duel, and twenty others fighting to get into doorways or behind corners, Charles de Young walked into the center of the street, one shot left in his revolver, daring Napthaly to show himself. Benjamin was already well into a building. Police appeared. Both duelists went before Police Chief Theodore Cockrill, who welcomed them as old friends. Bail was set at \$15,000, which Brother Michael soon produced. Napthaly declined to post bail, again considering a cell a cozy spot.

At the preliminary hearing, de Young explained the heavy over-coat and scarf by a severe cold. He said Napthaly drew first and *naturally* he returned the fire. Napthaly said he was certainly surprised when the first bullet whizzed past his head—and *naturally* he returned the fire. Napthaly was his own defense counsel and did a good job of it. It turned out he was a *natural* lawyer. (In fact, he ended his days, many years later, as a well-paid attorney in the city and—believe it or not—a good friend of M. H. de Young.)

The *Chronicle's* chief witness was a strange person named Thomas Ryan, who said he had seen the entire duel. He testified he saw Napthaly fire the first shot. Positively he had not discussed the case with any *Chronicle* people. Napthaly let him talk, then produced *Chronicle* reporter Oscar Shuck, later to be a famous lawyer. Shuck testified he had discussed the case with Ryan in great detail, but had not coached him.

Napthaly put Ryan back on the stand and asked: "You heard what Mr. Shuck said?"

"All I know about the case," replied Ryan, "is that Napthaly fired the first shot."

"You seem a bit confused," offered Napthaly.

"Well, I sort of am, at that," said the witness. "I have taken about forty drinks so far today, but Shuck didn't pay for them. All I know about the case is . . ."

"Stand down!" yelled Napthaly.

The judge dismissed the charges against Napthaly and held de Young for the higher court. Many months later, Napthaly had the case dismissed. He said he really liked the robust spirit of the de Youngs.

## CHAPTER XXV

# “The Chinese Must Go!”

NOW, as the middle seventies approached, Denis Kearney was gathering the poor of the city into a fighting unit that was rioting its way into temporary control of the city's politics. The movement was primarily to oust the Chinese laborers, who, now that the mine tailings were worked out and the railroad completed, were undermining wages. Seven-eighths of the Chinese population of the United States now lived in San Francisco. Mobs were crying, “The Chinese must go!”

Just how the sandlot movement, led by the drayman Kearney, came to a head is not clearly traceable. When Managing Editor John P. Young of the *Chronicle* reminisced in his paper in 1915, he blamed the whole affair on the defenseless Henry George, who once held Young's job.

“George,” said Young, “started a movement, the progress of

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which could not be arrested until a complete reform was effected. It does not matter that it was not brought about in the mode he conceived to be proper; the really important thing is the fact that the monopolization of the land, which he dwelt upon, was broken and the abuse, which he condemned, was effectually and permanently done away with in California, which, to his alarmed vision in 1870, presented the spectacle of a great state in the hands of a few landlords, who would ultimately control all the land within its borders.

"He had a real campaign on against land monopoly and had reform well under way when the big bonanza was struck in 1875. This blew everything. Four men owned the bonanza stock. They took out \$200,000,000 and other Comstock mines took another \$138,000,000. This whooped business into artificial briskness—and George's reforms were soon forgotten.

"Then came the gambling for big stakes on the market. It had glamor. Everybody bought—the minister, the deacon, the servant, the master. The *Stock Report* was founded as a newspaper just to report movements of stock only. There was wild excitement for three, four years; millions were made and lost overnight. There were tragedies innumerable, and the suicide list was abnormally swollen. Trusted employees were sometimes short as much as \$300,000.

"In the winter of 1876-77 there was a disastrous dry season, and production went down and prosperity fled again. Thus it can be seen the so-called sandlot troubles did not come from a clear sky. There were genuine manifestations of dissatisfaction with a condition of affairs that meant mischief and were a source of apprehension to the thoughtful."

It was an economic war. There were breadlines throughout the nation. Bloody railroad strikes were on in the East. In San Francisco one hundred men each day were chosen to work in Golden Gate Park. They fought to get in line each morning. They got one dollar for ten hours, and at noon each got a loaf of bread with a hunk of boiled corned beef in it. Kearney led 1,500 unemployed through the streets. The cry from the ranks was "Bread or a place to sleep in the county jail!" In July of 1877, a night meeting was called for a sandlot in the lower triangle of what is now the great Civic Center. It

was to be a sympathy demonstration for the Eastern railroad strikers.

Newspapers reported the next day that an hour before the meeting the nearby streets "were black with men and women walking toward the park." At meeting time about 6,000 were in the lot. Two new naphtha lamps were blazing at the speakers' stand. They went out and no one was able to re-light them. In the semi-darkness the thousands began to mill about. Then someone pulled a recently installed fire-alarm box on the corner and when the engines and their beautiful horses pulled up, the entire crowd rushed to see where the fire was.

Now that the crowd was pulled over to the side of the park, a rifle was fired several times from an upper window. One bullet struck an old man in the face, another man got a slug in the hand, a third bullet pierced a boy's cap and made a scalp wound. The mob rushed the house and dragged forth a moronic boy who whimpered he had meant no harm, he just had a desire to fire into a crowd. He was hustled off to jail, but violence had come and the crowd had become a mob, ripe for hoodlum rule. The cry, "The Chinese must go!" began to be heard. A half hundred men went up a street looking for trouble, which they found at a Chinese laundry at Geary and Leaveworth. Here the first stone was cast that started San Francisco into nights and days of wildness.

Most of the Chinese, hearing the mob coming, had fled, but some of them were beaten by the crowd. In wrecking the laundry, a hoodlum hurled a kerosene lamp against a wall. Before the fire department arrived, the building was a mass of flames and white tenants of flats above had to leap to the sidewalk, some breaking legs. Hoses were cut and firemen began to use their fists. Police went into the riot with night sticks, only to suffer a bad mauling.

The triumphant mob moved on down Geary to Powell, there to wreck another Chinese wash house. The Chinese, tipped off, disappeared. At Post and Taylor, the mob rushed another laundry and tore up and trampled the clothes. Now out of hand, the hoodlums began to plunder groceries and liquor stores. As they marched away, fortified with liquor and the general loot of cheap victories, a strange phrase was called along the ranks and became a sort of confused battle cry for days thereafter. It was: "We ain't no slaves; are we, Bill?"

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At Union Square a decision to "take" Chinatown was made at an impromptu rally. Reserve police had, however, gathered to make a standing fight of it at California and Dupont Streets, then the entrance to the Oriental section. Here attackers had to dash up a hill to meet police lined up across a narrow street. They took a beating. The police swung hard and there were cracked heads and some blood and when the mob retreated a number lay unconscious in the street. So the night of July 23rd ended.

July 24th Brigadier General John McComb, now editor of the *Alta*, called his National Guard to the colors. The Navy sent down the gunboats *Pensacola* and *Lackawanna* from Mare Island and moored them at the foot of Market Street. William T. Coleman, former president of the Vigilantes, gathered 200 businessmen, among them Frederick MacCrellish, owner of the *Alta*, D. O. Mills, James C. Flood, Andrew S. Hallidie, inventor of the famed cable cars. The police, it was announced, could only muster 200 men. Coleman called again for volunteers to be formed into military companies as a Committee of Safety.

That day saw only minor disturbances.

Newspapers, in their hindsight reporting of the next day's affair of Rincon Hill, said that throughout the daylight hours there had been a feeling of repressed excitement. Police and Coleman's committeemen also caught the premonition and gathered—without call—at Horticultural Hall, the headquarters where the pick handles had been piled. Before darkness fell, the police chief issued a curfew, ordering all from the streets unless on official business. The committee in early evening gathered for an organization meeting. In the midst of this the city powerhouse whistle began to blast the number of a fire box on the waterfront. The city already had some crank boxes on corners and large bells still atop fire stations, but still volunteer firemen augmented the regulars when the steam whistle tolled the box number.

Without further command, half the committee gathered pick handles and left at a dogtrot for the scene. As they swung across lower Market Street, flames were high in a lumber yard near Beale and the Embarcadero. A great mob had gathered and as the Committee of Safety took positions, a man crept in, swung an ax and cut a hose.

The crowd cheered. Pick handles began to swing as committeemen went into the crowd in an attempt to arrest the saboteur. The crowd, backed toward the base of the hill, began to hurl stones.

Suddenly the ten whistles were sounded at the powerhouse. Mayor A. J. Bryant had ordered the ten repeated five times. It was the famous riot call that had not been sounded since the Vigilante days. Repeated on the fire-station gongs, it called all reserves into action.

When the full committee and police reserves arrived at the battlefront they were met with a rain of stones that felled some of them. A charge was ordered by Police Chief John Fitzpatrick. The mob gave slowly, a number being clubbed down. Police and safety men fell, too. Finally the crowd had been backed up the hill—the same heights from which a mob of fighting labor men would be driven under a hail of bullets during the tragic Black Friday fifty-seven years later. The hoodlums now in control of the hilltop began to roll cobbles down upon the police. Coleman and Fitzpatrick, seeing the firemen unable to fight the fire that had spread to other lumberyards, decided serious battle must be enjoined and an assault of the hill was ordered.

As the safety men took up the assault, Coleman, Fitzpatrick and Lieutenant General H. A. Cobb of the Militia, who had now come from Sacramento, took forward positions and walked into the barrage of stones. The crowd did not give, and it was suddenly club against club, until the first shot was fired. The bullet came from the top of the hill and seemed to give heart to the mob. It closed ranks and drove the committeemen pell mell down the hill.

Below, in a disorganized group with the burning lumber lighting their backs, Coleman's men stood silent, wiping faces and bandaging heads, tasting defeat. Into this band four men came carrying a body. It was that of A. H. Gudewill, teller of the London & San Francisco Bank. A bullet had entered his abdomen. Word was passed that the single shot so far fired had killed a committeeman. Then the committee formed again, resolute and angry. Fire hoses were turned on the hill without effect. Stones continued to fall. There were shots fired from the hill. Now the police returned the shots, and the committee charged the hill once more. Under bullets the mob broke and

fled. Ten were shot, two of them fatally. Six others were so badly clubbed that they were hospitalized. Several hundred were arrested. Two men died under the wheels of a fire engine that tried to break through the battle to get to the other side of the fire.

As weary and dirty committeemen patrolled the area, reports came that crowds were forming in many parts of the city. The jail was so full that many prisoners were lying on the floors of the corridors. The police chief posted a few guards at the prison and moved the rest of his forces into different parts of the city. At Lotta's Fountain, Kearny and Market, a group of committeemen were posted to cut off gangs that might head toward the jail.

Suddenly, near midnight, a mob came out of Annie Alley, a tiny street now behind the Palace Hotel and named undoubtedly for some over-friendly lady of the early days. Annie Alley is just about opposite the famous fountain, and when the mob dashed across Market Street it took the committeemen by surprise. The mob had clubs now, too, and it rushed upon the committeemen and exchanged hefty blows. It was vicious; many dropping and not getting up. A police sergeant, seeing the row from a distance, took a company of police around Third and into Stevenson Alley and came up Annie Alley behind the mob, thus pinching them in. The mob took a bad beating. Twenty were captured and added to the prisoners they had hoped to release. A score went to hospitals, among them many committeemen.

The next day the newspapers screamed for Federal help. Coleman wired President Hayes. He sent 1,760 rifles and 500 carbines from the Benicia Arsenal. There were already 6,000 hickory pick handles in the armory. The Navy agreed to hold many of the prisoners. Some were taken to Goat Island in the center of the bay and the Navy patrolled it with small boats. Criminals began leaving the city in droves. The defeated rioters became quiet.

Archbishop J. S. Alemany issued a circular calling upon all Catholics to stand behind legal authority. He also placed his finger scornfully on the government that had failed to give relief for the Asiatic problem which he recognized as the cause of the trouble:

"Injuries," he added, "are sometimes hard to bear and the government very slow in affording relief. But the remedy lies not in the

mad torch of anarchy. No portion of our republic has suffered more than the people of California from the flood of Asiatic immigration, supplanting all kinds of labor and trades, and practically exiling from their homes and country thousands of laborers and tradesmen."

The city was quiet and soon the Committee of Safety was disbanded. It was quiet except for the Sunday afternoon meetings of the sandlot agitators, now holding controlled and organized meetings as the Workingmen's Party with a definitely sullen purpose.

Kearney, who controlled these sandlot meetings, is one of the remarkable characters of remarkable San Francisco. He was born in County Cork in 1847. At eleven he was a cabin boy and at twenty, when he first came to San Francisco, he was already a first officer. He had a master's certificate at twenty-one, although he could just read and write. By 1876, he became an American citizen and left the sea. He became a drayman, and from the beginning a leader in the Draymen's and Teamsters' Union. He loved his voice and studied many hours each night developing his speech and his delivery. He was loud and emotional, vigorous, illogical, but, finally, an effective rouser whose words had a way of dragging men's reluctant feet into step with his.

Newspapers that at first backed him in his fight against the corporations, since it was their fight too, now began to consider him a little too warm to handle. He had been crying aloud: "Judge Lynch is the only judge we want," and "Bullets must replace ballots," and a lot of that sort of thing. Soon he found that the small draying company he owned was losing its customers because of his connection with the party. That made him more bitter. Police began to make a campaign of arresting him—and his party grew in strength.

Then a Workingmen's Party Senator went to the Legislature from Alameda County. This was the whack over the head that brought politicians out of their sleep.

The Democratic Party had believed until the new party was formed that the majority of laboring men was voting with it. Now it appeared that those men were to form their own voting machine, leaving the Democrats out on a limb. Philip Roach, editor of the *Examiner*, still an evening Democratic daily, was called upon by his party to help hold the men in line. At the time, Roach was also

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a State Senator. He appeared at a night meeting of the Workingmen's Party at Union Hall. Roach was a conservative fellow, as was his party at the time, and he made a mildly radical speech, as he thought fitted the occasion. He was very tough on political corruption, mildly opposed Chinese immigration, said something should be done about unemployment.

He sat down and Kearney took the platform. He began by shouting, "The Chinese must go!" which was now his rallying cry. The mob, which had received Roach politely and not too loudly, rose to its feet in a mass, screaming the call. Then Kearney went on, calling up everyone present to get a rifle and "added some flip to his talk by banging his fist so hard on the table that the water pitcher jumped to the floor." He said in his broad brogue that his recommendation of the moment was that all capitalists be hanged. Roach, the stars long gone out of his eyes, edged from chair to chair until he was near the exit. Then he bolted.

Kearney now told of his plans to form military companies. He had just returned from the country districts where he had formed companies in six towns.

"At these cities," he said, "I was asked for my platform, and at each I gave this answer."

Whereupon he drew from his waist a long rope and on the end of it was a noose.

The next day he was arrested again and charged with conspiracy to incite riot. Later he was acquitted. Meanwhile, he had been elected commander of all military companies of the Workingmen's Party with the rank of lieutenant general. The uniform was black pants, blue shirt and fatigue hat.

Now a full ticket of Workingmen's candidates for city offices was announced.

"If Denis Kearney and his gang obtain control of San Francisco, there will be given to the city to regret and lament the worst spectacle of misgovernment ever seen in the Republic," said the *Chronicle*. "There will be no apology worth making to this community when it stands between the devil and deep sea under the rule of the political mad dog Kearney."

The paper then went on to designate the party candidates:  
"For Mayor, a tainted preacher, seeking his election in low groggeries.

"For Sheriff, a rabid Fenian with a record of four jail liberations in Australia.

"For School Superintendent, a man who failed in June last to obtain a third-grade certificate.

"For Tax Collector, a pretended painter and actual vendor of Chinese lottery tickets and gambler at the game of tan.

"For Assessor, a political barnacle of the scaliest order.

"For County Clerk, a sweet boy-graduate of Berkeley, who had been of late writing speeches for Kearney.

"For Surveyor, a man who had already run away with \$300 of his party's fund."

To this list, it added that several seekers after the minor offices could neither read nor write (which was true).

The *Chronicle* listed the jobs (when working) of candidates:

For Supervisor: jewelry apprentice, small hotel proprietor, grocer, laborer on streets, tailor, teamster (illiterate), cobbler, trunk-maker (illiterate), stone cutter. For Legislature: coal heaver, painter, janitor, tramp-printer, hackman, saloon-keeper (who had been accused previously of shanghaiing sailors on the San Francisco waterfront; in other words, a crimp). This last candidate, said the *Chronicle*, also had a habit of stealing unwatched overcoats. Another was known as "King of the Dora Street hoodlums." (The word hoodlum is indigenous to San Francisco and originated with the gangs called hoods who prowled the night streets.)

Few of the candidates' names could be found in the City Directory, and some gave addresses that the *Chronicle* could not verify.

The "tainted preacher" running for Mayor was the Reverend Isaac S. Kalloch. Already, the *Chronicle* had printed a small item with above it: "Reprinted from the Wichita, Kan., Herald of June 29, 1879:"

"The Reverend Ike Kalloch of Boston scandal fame, who achieved some notoriety in this state as a self-adjustable lawyer, preacher, politician and common barroom loafer, who smoked poor cigars and

drank poorer whiskey, and who jumped Leavenworth and Lawrence, leaving a long list of creditors to mourn his untimely departure, is Kearney's candidate for Mayor of San Francisco."

The Reverend Mr. Kalloch is another fine example of the remarkable characters that blossomed suddenly in the warmth of San Francisco's stirring days of strife and uncertainty. He rose high there, after a strange past that apparently was filled with anything but strictly clerical friendship with women. He was known to newspapermen as the Sorrel Stallion. He was, for a short but vital period, the most important person in the city, a man who invited violence for years and was at last to achieve it.

## CHAPTER XXVI

# Kalloch Is Shot

ISAAC SMITH KALLOCH was about forty-five years old when he came to San Francisco in 1876. He was a huge fellow, 240 pounds, slim-hipped, big-shouldered, with a great mop of flaming red hair and well-trimmed pink whiskers. He was soon pastor of the Metropolitan Temple, a great edifice on Fifth Street between Mission and Market Streets. In it were classrooms, a gymnasium, day nurseries, sewing and manual training centers and a large library. Its main auditorium seated 3,000 on the ground floor and its balconies and standing room could hold another 2,000. It had a pipe organ that cost, in those more reasonable days, \$16,000.

Isaac Lankershim, wealthy Los Angeles real-estate man, had given the planners of the Temple \$250,000. It was a modern project, combining business and religion. Ten cents admission was charged on

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Sunday nights when the Reverend Kalloch lectured on topics of the day, including politics.

By the time the Reverend Kalloch was twenty-three years old, he was a minister of the famous Tremont Temple of Boston, then the largest church in the nation. In the winter of 1857, Kalloch went to deliver a lecture at East Cambridge and took a woman friend, not his wife, in his sleigh. Arriving early, Kalloch took a hotel room. The nosy manager got a box, mounted it and peered hopefully through a crack in the transom—and told. He told the dirty little *Boston Times*. Said this penny dreadful:

“Who was the Lady in Black who stayed a few hours in the Lechmere House on the night of January 12th? And drank a whiskey skin there? It was no one other than the famous Reverend Isaac S. Kalloch of Temple Tremont, Boston, and the lady was *not* his wife!”

The Grand Jury followed through and indicted Kalloch in February, charging him with adultery. The trial was a sensation of the day when the Scarlet Letter still had a meaning. Richard Henry Dana Jr., who had already written *Two Years Before the Mast*, was Kalloch’s attorney. One of the important facts he brought out in the many days of trial was how to make a whiskey skin. It was disclosed, most unexcitingly, to be bourbon, a spoon of ground sugar and warm water.

Dana put the keyhole or rather the transom peeker over the jumps, and considerable vulgar testimony resulted, most of it imagination. Two jurors wanted something more than hearsay and held out for acquittal. Ten of them thought Kalloch guilty.

The Reverend Kalloch left Boston and was away for a year. Then he got a pulpit in New York and the crowds rushed to hear him. Greeley’s *Tribune* bemoaned:

“Crowds rushed to hear him because he had been indicted and tried for adultery, while good and pure men might hold forth to bare walls. Let us hope the evil communications of Boston may not corrupt our New York manners.”

New York newspapers kept a permanent assignment on him, but found little news—until a janitor told. This good man informed reporters that the minister had “spent part of a night with a loose girl from the choir.” Kalloch made a hasty exit toward Kansas, where

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he founded a newspaper and a railroad. He bred prize horses, had his own race track and also raised game cocks. He had a big mansion. He purchased a hotel in Lawrence, at the bar of which, the *Boston Herald* said, he sometimes mixed the drinks. Frank Harris, then a cowboy, later a noted and somewhat notorious writer, was a waiter at Kalloch's hotel for a time. The ex-minister spread himself all over the landscape—and finally went broke. At last, in San Francisco, he went back to the church, taking over Lankershim's Temple when it was completed. Again he was riding high. Wrote a Leavenworth editor, when the word came back: "Brother Kalloch is again in clover."

The San Francisco newspapers paid little attention to Kalloch until he went into politics and became a champion of the workingmen's cause. Then they began to pound him with sledge hammers. The *Chronicle* struck hardest of all. It printed an exposé—a two-and-a-half-column report of his old adultery trial. The article had a heading of fourteen decks. It was entitled, *The Record of a Misspent Life*.

Kalloch, the next day, called a meeting of his congregation. He said he would hold a mass meeting Friday night. He would at that time read an article that had appeared in the old *Sun* years before. It was the same personal attack that the irresponsible Ben Napthaly had made during his shooting row with the de Youngs. Long ago, Napthaly had retracted that insult and long ago his *Sun* had disappeared over the horizon.

When the meeting was held at the church, a mob fought to get in and Kalloch had to speak outside also where a crowd filled the street and the long, wide steps of the Mint. Bonfires blazed along the curbs. Kalloch spoke from atop a piano box. He did not repeat the libelous remarks from the old *Sun* as he had promised. But he said enough. ("His true remarks," said the *Call*, "have, strangely, never been recorded.")

The next morning, Charles de Young left his home in a hired cab and went to the District Telegraph Company's office where a fifteen-year-old messenger was picked up. The cab then went far out Mission Street to Kalloch's home. He was not home. The cab went back to the Temple. Kalloch was there, standing at the curb drawing on his gloves, about to get into his own buggy. The boy was told to tell

Kalloch someone in the cab wanted to speak to him. The driver was meantime putting a blanket over his steaming horse.

The boy told Kalloch, who turned and came toward the cab. As he approached, Charles de Young thrust a revolver out of the cab window and fired. Kalloch spun and dropped. De Young yelled to the cabbie to drive fast to the police station. As the cabbie rushed to pull the blanket off the horse, there was a second shot. Kalloch, who had staggered to his feet, fell a second time.

Immediately there was pandemonium. The messenger boy suddenly streaked off down the street. Jim Ransome, Kalloch's Negro bodyguard, once a slave, rushed out of the Temple with a number of men and attempted to pull de Young from the cab. The driver stood his ground, lashing out with his whip, but suddenly his cab was hurled on its side. He and his passenger spilled into the street, and de Young was severely beaten. At this point, police arrived and rescued de Young and hustled him away. A small crowd followed, throwing stones.

Kalloch had been carried into his study in the Temple. Here doctors discovered the bullets had entered his left side. They announced he had a short time to live. A number of the helpers of the church soon began to strew tanbark over the cobblestones of the street outside to deaden the sound of passing wagons. The Workingmen's Party called a mass meeting, and thousands stopped work and gathered near the City Hall. Denis Kearney made an angry speech as the crowd screamed for action. Kalloch's son, also a minister, asked that no mob action take place, but he said, "If no redress can be had from the law, I will see that de Young is killed."

The Tenth Ward Rifles were sworn in that afternoon, and by nightfall the Twelfth Ward, the French Volunteers and the Kearney Light Guard, all Workingmen's "soldiers" in uniform, marched up Market Street. The Governor then called the State Militia and posted several companies at the City Prison. Guards were also placed at the *Chronicle* office at Bush and Kearny. The Militia carried the new Gatling guns, and during the night three field artillery pieces were brought up.

The next day, delegates from the Workingmen's Party made an

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unusual deal with Police Chief Fitzpatrick. They promised that if several of their members were permitted to stay inside the jail to see that de Young was not spirited away they, in turn, would promise no mob violence. Chief Fitzpatrick gladly accepted, and General McComb ordered the Militia back to the armories.

Word came, after long days, that Kalloch would recover, and de Young was released on bail. At the election, held when the minister was still in a critical condition, Kalloch won by the slight margin of 1,582 votes. The Workingmen's Party won sheriff, auditor, treasurer, city attorney, public administrator, surveyor and tax collector, but only two supervisors, which gave Kalloch small support in council. From the first day, Mayor Kalloch was a clay pigeon to the newspapers. He started out by saying in his inaugural address:

"The people expect their officials to steal. They are disappointed if they do not."

This was merely an observation, but upon it his political enemies builded until they had a *cause célèbre*. The supervisors who hated him and the newspapers, who did likewise, opened campaigns to gain his impeachment. An official of the Chamber of Commerce finally did bring charges—on the ridiculous claim that he had accepted a pass on the privately owned street railway. At the first hearing, a Superior Court judge threw the charge out of court as being frivolous.

In the meantime, de Young's trial had been continued many times, and the Reverend Isaac M. Kalloch, son of the Mayor, who had promised vengeance, had returned to San Francisco from his small church in the Mother Lode region. He had been drinking morosely for several weeks. On Friday night, April 23, 1880, he walked rapidly into the *Chronicle* office. Charles de Young was leaning against the counter talking to two businessmen who had come with advertisements.

All looked up sharply, for the young man had yanked the door open with considerable energy. He also had a pistol in his hand. Without a word, he fired one shot at de Young, who ran back. Kalloch then fired three more times. The editor had dropped behind the counter and was trying desperately to get his own pistol from his

rear pocket. But he had an overcoat on and this hindered his hand. Kalloch leaned over the counter and fired a final shot, his pistol within two feet of the fallen man.

Kalloch stood a moment looking down at his victim and then turned calmly and walked out. Neither Kalloch nor de Young had said a word before or during the shooting. A police officer arrested the young minister as he stepped out of the office. They stepped back into the office and looked down again upon de Young. He had got his gun out of his pocket a fraction of a second before the fifth shot, and it was still in his hand, unfired, when he died.

The defense of young Kalloch was carefully planned from the moment of the inquest. It was going to be self-defense—that Charles de Young drew first. A strange character had been found to testify. He was J. Hobson Clemetshaw, who said this name was too hard to pronounce so he was using James Alexander Watson. He was a saddle-maker who had been in much trouble.

Now he claimed he had been at the office on the night of the shooting buying a paper. He said that Kalloch came in and held considerable conversation with Charles de Young at the counter. Then, "The man with the black whiskers (de Young) suddenly pulled a pistol and fired point blank at Kalloch. The latter at once returned the fire, and de Young fell." He was very dramatic about it, describing the scene as a duel in which both men stood face to face with level pistols spurting fire.

Young Kalloch was held for murder, and the *Call* decided to take a second look at Clemetshaw, alias Watson. It disclosed that a few months previously Clemetshaw had another man arrested for stealing from him and during the man's trial called in a lady friend to testify. This lady turned out to be Philomenia Falkner, alias Mary Reinhardt, also known as the Galloping Cow. The "Cow" was quite a person. Her record showed a term in the county jail for stealing silverware. Also, there was time in San Quentin for throwing a four-year-old boy out of a second-story window because the youngster had informed someone she had stolen a pair of ducks. With this association, the *Call* intimated that perhaps Clemetshaw could be without a sense of accuracy. The authorities thought so, too, and threw a

perjury charge on him for his careless testimony at the de Young inquest.

So by the time young Kalloch came to trial, Clemetshaw had to be brought over from San Quentin prison in handcuffs, having been given five years for illegal lying. He testified, nevertheless, almost as he had at the preliminary hearing, but the handcuffs did not help his testimony very much. It was left up to Kalloch to make good his own defense. On the stand he recalled again the old story of the charges against his father. He said on the morning of the shooting someone had delivered to him a new pamphlet on the adultery case and he at once thought it must have been published by the de Youngs. He had gone to the *Chronicle* to have it stopped. He had been talking to Charles de Young about it when the latter suddenly drew and fired at him. From that moment he remembered nothing until he came to running along the street, and a policeman had him. He was a very tired man. He had been overworking. He had been treated for months for congestion of the brain. He had been drinking some . . .

The prosecution proved without possible doubt that de Young's gun had not been fired. It was proved by chemical test and the words of the policeman who picked it up and by the testimony of three men who were in the office when the shooting occurred. It was a long, sensational trial. It took twenty days to select a jury and twenty-eight more of testimony and argument. It was a record at the time. The second ballot acquitted Kalloch.

Outside the crowd captured a cab and took the horses off it and placed Kalloch in the seat and dragged him about town. Now he was the hero for the moment. There was rope 100 feet long on the cab and former slave Jim Ransome sat on the front seat yelling at the pulling men. The cab went all the way to the father's home in Mission Street where speeches were made.

But fame built on notoriety is often short-lived. Mayor Kalloch finished out his two-year term and was refused endorsement by his own party for a second try at it. He was just too much of a burden. M. C. Blake, whom the de Youngs had brought into politics to oppose their old enemy Judge Delos Lake, won the mayoralty. News-

papers began to put Kalloch farther and farther back in the news columns. Finally he slipped entirely off the pages.

He gathered his shooting son and left for the Northwest.

Years later, he came back to San Francisco to lecture. He had become a lawyer in Bellingham, Washington Territory. Now he took Union Hall to lecture on "The Use and Abuse of the Pistol." It was a free lecture. Few came and not one newspaper sent a reporter, so there is no record of what he said. He went back to Washington, and years later came back to the city of his greatest triumph, a sick man, diabetic, seeking surgery. There were no notices about it in the papers. He apparently underwent a successful operation and returned north. In Seattle a stroke ended his career December 9, 1887. There were small, inside notices in the San Francisco newspapers, including the *Chronicle*. One of them said, "He died without drama."



## CHAPTER XXVII

# The King Is Dead!

WINTER darkness falls early in San Francisco when both fog and drizzle are drifting along its seven hills. It is the Coastal Indians' "sad weather" when the weary creep into shelters. Aboriginal folklore says when chieftains die it is considered right that the night should have fog and rain drifting together. On such a night, San Francisco lost its only king, and its newspapers announced solemnly that the king was dead. There was no apodosis: Long live the king! For there was to be only one emperor in the city, and he had fallen ignominiously in the street, without attendants, his uncombed beard smeared with the muck of unswept streets.

Norton I, Emperor of all America and Protector of Mexico Dei Gratia, was gone. In his pockets were a \$2.50 gold piece, \$3 in silver and a franc note of 1828. Police took him away from the corner of California and Dupont in a dead wagon that had not been hosed

out for some time. He was dressed in his regimentals, with tarnished epaulettes. The withered flower was still in his lapel. The beaver hat with its bright feather cockade, the tri-colored umbrella and the knotted cane were tossed into the wagon before it drove away.

In January of 1880, Emperor Norton was dead after reigning with expert dignity for twenty-one years. His scrip had been honored without question; proclamations read and bowed to by thousands. He had always addressed the King of Prussia and Queen Victoria as "Dear Cousins," and suggested once that the Widow of Windsor might like to wed with him. He had been listed in the official City Directory as "Norton, Joshua (Emperor)." He had ordered the Republican and Democratic parties abolished as being incompatible. He had issued bonds and levied his own private taxes.

All this because the newspapers of San Francisco made him so. Emperor Norton was their creation. They had started him out in 1859, when he was just plain Joshua Abraham Norton, Character Number One. For years, they printed his proclamations and mentioned his social activities.

Now that the king was dead, the city decided that royalty should not lie in a pauper's grave. The Pacific Club (now Nob Hill's Pacific Union, most exclusive men's club in the city) took over. The richest men buried the poorest man.

In the undertaking parlor on lower O'Farrell Street, the Emperor lay in state for a day while 10,000 passed for a farewell look. Newspapers were lavish in their descriptions of the ceremonies. "The body lay in a wilderness of blooms," said the *Bulletin*.

When the Reverend W. L. Githens read the Episcopal service, a boys' choir sang "Nearer, my God, to Thee," and the congregation joined in the singing. Many wept. Part of San Francisco's tradition was being buried. The Pacific Club members bought the plot.

You must be in a pleasant mood with soft shadows somewhere in the back of your mind to appreciate Emperor Norton. Only a true indigene of the sentimental city by the Golden Gate can evaluate this, and if you are too steady mentally for such sympathetic understanding—just smile kindly and pass along.

No other city has cared quite so much for this sort of emotional business. After Norton I had been kowtowed to in San Francisco for

a few years, and his whims obeyed with grins and money (21 years of it, finally!), a fellow announced himself King of New York. He posthaste landed in jail and was flipped from there into an insane asylum.

In 1849, Norton came to San Francisco with \$40,000. By 1853, through speculations in foodstuffs, he was worth a quarter of a million and had constructed and was operating the first rice mill on the Pacific Coast. Then he tried to corner the rice market—and an unexpected arrival of rice-laden ships ruined him. He became a quiet eccentric, living alone in a cheap room.

In September of 1859, while the city's newspapers were shaking fists at each other over the Broderick-Terry duel, Editor Fitch of the *Bulletin* looked up one afternoon to see a man standing in the doorway of his small office. He had a piece of paper in his hand.

"I was wondering," the man said gently, "if you would care to publish this."

He placed the paper on the desk and without another word moved out. Fitch, already nicknamed the Deacon, looked at it later in the day when his deadline was passed. It read:

"At the peremptory request and desire of a large majority of the citizens of these United States, I, Joshua Norton, formerly of Algoa Bay, Cape of Good Hope, and now for the last nine years and ten months past of San Francisco, California, declare and proclaim myself Emperor of these United States; and in virtue of the authority thereby in me vested, do hereby order and direct the representatives of the different states of the Union to assemble in Musical Hall, of this city, on the 1st day of February next, then and there to make such alterations in the existing laws of the Union as may ameliorate the evils under which the country is laboring, and thereby cause confidence to exist, both at home and abroad, in our stability and integrity.

Norton I.  
Emperor of the United States."

Deacon Fitch had his moment of caprice. He printed it. Later, defending his lapse of dignity, he said he considered the proclamation had a quality of relief in the midst of tension over the tragic duel.

The announcement caused little notice, but Norton came back to the *Bulletin* on October 12th, pleased and kindly intentioned. He had a proclamation abolishing Congress because there was so much fraud and corruption in public office that he thought it might be well to start all over again. Fitch had another weak moment and again published the Emperor's orders. This pleased His Majesty so much that he proclaimed the *Bulletin* his official publication. He came in soon with an order doing away with the State Supreme Court because it had recently been reversing the lower courts.

By now, rude persons were beginning to laugh at the fellow a serious-minded newspaper editor had created in a moment of capriciousness. Particularly was he funny since he had donned a uniform. A newspaper or two ridiculed him and the Emperor had his official journal publish his reply:

"Whereas, certain scurrilous and untrue articles, attacking our right and propriety, had appeared in one or two insignificant papers of this city; and

"Whereas, there are always portions of a community whose taste can be pampered by low and improper articles:

"Therefore, I decree that the good sense and honesty of purpose of the nation is not to be insulted by such trash.

Norton I."

The Emperor, in his splendid uniform (which the general at the Presidio had presented), took up the afternoon fashion promenade along Montgomery and Kearny Streets, already a tradition in the city that was to thrive on traditions when times got hard. Gentlemen and their ladies made the *paseo* of the two main streets, dressed in their best, bowing and hat-lifting as they moved. To the young bloods it was also the cocktail route. The Emperor accepted the bows of his subjects with dignity. He had become an intimate reality. Newspapers accepted him as part of the fun of living in San Francisco. His scrip, printed by the famous printer, Charles A. Murdock, was now numbered serially, was signed and bore the Emperor's picture. It was accepted without argument at its face value, four-bits (fifty cents). Each note carried a promise of 5 percent interest and was due in 1880. It is significant (if you are seriously inclined

that way) to note that all his bonds and scrip were payable in 1880—the year that he was to enter only eight days before dropping dead.

Saloons and restaurants liked the spirit of the thing. Norton ate where he pleased for twenty-one years; never paid a cent; offered one of his bonds for fifty cents if he felt generous. He marched into offices of the city's millionaires without bothering the secretaries outside. He always asked for a million or two, and it was proper to inform him that you were sorry but the Queen of Sheba or King Cole had been ahead of him, and would fifty cents be sufficient this time? It would.

He had any seat that was vacant at curtain time in the city's theaters. He paid no fare on the street cars. His clothing was furnished without cost by the best tailors (including the original Bullock & Jones), who announced by window cards that they were tailors by appointment to His Majesty. He had many walking sticks, some brought to him from far ends of the earth.

Many years later, Robert Louis Stevenson, who loved San Francisco with all his generous heart, wrote about him in *The Wrecker*. He said:

“. . . In what other city would a harmless madman who supposed himself Emperor of the two Americas have been so fostered and encouraged? Where else would even the people of the streets have respected the poor soul's illusion? Where else would bankers and merchants have received his visits, cashed his cheques, and submitted to his small assessments? Where else would he have been suffered to attend and address the exhibition days of schools and colleges? Where else, in God's green earth, have taken his pick of restaurants, ransacked the bill of fare, and departed scatheless? They tell me he was even an exacting patron, threatening to withdraw his custom when dissatisfied; and I can believe it, for his face wore an expression distinctly gastronomical. . . .”

The only man who saw nothing humorous in Emperor Norton was his Chinese laundryman, who did not have much imagination, particularly about non-governmental currency. To save face for both the Emperor and the Chinese, Norton's landlord paid the laundry bill and added it to the rent. (In all the years of his reign, the only thing which canny Norton paid was his room rent.)



As time went on and San Francisco took to its tender bosom the strange, simple king, a blue book of the noblesse was kept by him. Each loyal subject therein paid 50 cents on the first of the month, a system something similar to tithing. Norton collected personally, having no constable, and checked each off the book. One merchant, who was away for eighteen months, cheerfully paid his nine dollars upon return.

Occasionally the Emperor was permitted to inspect the troops at the Presidio and the University of California cadets. Once he was refused passage on the Sacramento boat. Norton had planned a trip to the state capitol to scold his legislators and was much annoyed. He went to the *Alta California* (at the time his official newspaper, since Fitch's *Bulletin* had printed his last proclamation in small type too near the classified advertisements) and complained. He ordered a blockade order published, forbidding steamers up the river. The steamship company didn't think it was funny at all. It was competing now with the railroad. The company at once sent a life pass to the Emperor—and the next day he boarded the steamer and refused to return the salute of the mate at the gangplank.

One day, he saw a cartoon of himself in a store window, smashed the window with his cane and strode away. The merchant apologized, repaired the window at his own cost, and shortly after, when one of Norton's dogs was impounded, paid the license to get him out.

Norton had two mutt dogs, both of them almost as famous and as privileged as their master—Lazarus and Bummer. When Bummer died in 1865, the *Bulletin* carried a 500-word obituary, and Mark Twain wrote a piece about him for the *Territorial Enterprise*, Virginia City.

"That old Canine Celebrity of San Francisco," said the *Bulletin*, "surname Bummer, long petted and beloved by her citizens, is dead. It is generally known that he had been on the decline for some weeks past. He died as he had lived, open and above board, Bummer by name, bummer by nature, no more, no less . . ." There followed a sketch of Bummer's life, from his entrance into the city trotting under the axle of a prairie schooner.

When Lazarus died, he got expert treatment, free, from a taxider-

mist, and ended up in a glass cage in a celebrated saloon on the Montgomery Street champagne route.

As he grew older, Norton became more and more peremptory with his tailors. Some of them let him wait and he complained in a letter to the supervisors. The *Bulletin*, no longer the official publication, bravely took chances of being charged with insult to the sovereign:

"His Majesty's full dress never-mention-'ems have lost their seat, and there is dangerous risk of the Empire being brought into contempt."

Norton stepped over to the *Examiner* and made it a member of his royal family. Then ordered printed:

"Whereas, the *Evening Bulletin* newspaper has been goosey enough to join proscriptive traitors against our Empire of the United States and Protectorate of Mexico:

"Therefore, we Norton I, Gratia Dei Emperor, do hereby fine the said *Bulletin* \$2,000; the amount to be appropriated for our Royal Wardrobe."

All the papers, including the *Bulletin*, liked this and began to gang up on the supervisors, demanding they do something natty in the way of a uniform. Since this was hardly permissible by law, the supervisors dug into their own pockets and bought the old man a new suit.

San Francisco was enjoying its Emperor immensely. There were other characters around, but the newspapers liked Norton best of all. One other fellow did get into Henry George's *Progress and Poverty*, written in San Francisco after the author was editor of the *Post*. George described a human oddity, known only as the Money King. This "king" was a skinflint who, strangely enough, loved his reputation as a rich man better than his money. This was an odd situation. He had spent his life beating his creditors, mostly to be able to boast honestly about his wealth. One day, said Editor George, the Money King got into an argument with City Tax Collector John Cook, who accused him of being a miser. Said the Money King: "I have money to toss into the bay, and will do so, if you wish. I will toss five dollars into the water for every dollar you toss."

They went to the Embarcadero and began tossing cartwheels into

the bay. Cook thought the Money King's devotion to his silver dollars would soon halt him, but when the fellow had hurled in \$80 and Cook \$16, it was the latter who quit.

Henry George, hardly a frivolous character himself, thought this the silliest incident he had ever heard about. He used it as an example of what he termed "a destructive contest," and compared it to a strike. "The struggle of endurance involved," he wrote, "is also like a war and like all war it lessens wealth."

Emperor Norton has remained San Francisco's Character Number One. Today, almost seventy years after his death, he is still occasional news. Sometimes a pioneer who was on his books remembers another story about him before following on to where we all—king and subject—go at last. Usually, the contradictions are reviewed. Although a king, Norton lived in a six-by-ten room in a lodging house, in what was hardly a bon-ton neighborhood. The sign over the door read, "Rooms, 25¢ and 50¢." Norton had one of the fifty-cent ones. It had a camp cot, a cane chair, a pitcher and bowl, nails on the walls for his clothing. Each evening before going to bed he gave the landlord fifty cents.

Many nights he played chess at the Mechanics' Institute, where the games (perhaps the very same ones) are still going on. He won often, a feat of skill, endurance and sagacity in this particular experts' arena where two world's champions have met defeat. Other nights he attended church festivals, theaters, musicals, lectures. He often entered debates and upheld his arguments intelligently and logically.

He was still a great favorite when 1880 came. Businessmen were accepting him at face value along with his tax levies. But his fateful year had arrived, and he dropped dead on a suitable night when the drizzle and fog were down.

So the city wished him a farewell amidst a great bank of flowers, did the sentimental thing because it pleased it to sweeten the sorrow of the parting.

Years later—1934—when a new and more materialistic city forgot its promise to its dead and removed all bodies from the old Masonic Cemetery where the Emperor had lain for fifty-four years, the Pacific Union Club again took care of him.

When Norton I was unearthed, his redwood box was still intact but his body had not withstood time and those greedy creatures that live in the soil. The symbol of him, his uniform, was there, all except the wilted flower in his lapel.

At the new burial site in the great Woodlawn Cemetery, just across the county line, hundreds gathered to pay tribute again. The Municipal Band played and many spoke and Mayor Angelo Rossi placed a wreath on the tomb in behalf of the city. The 159th Infantry, Third Battalion, fired three volleys over the grave as it was filled in. The granite monument then placed at the head of the grave had chiseled upon its face:

Norton I  
Emperor of the United States  
and  
Protector of Mexico.  
Joshua A. Norton  
1819-1880.

There are no quotation marks about any of these words.

## CHAPTER XXVIII

# Dizzy Dalziel Has Fun

WHILE Emperor Norton was still setting the mood for careless San Francisco, Davison Dalziel came to town. Dalziel, who took luxurious pleasure in being zany, was, at the moment, a poverty-happy adventurer from Australia. Later, he flung his personality into England to be knighted and die worth eleven millions.

Fremont Older, the lovable, the tender, the violent humanitarian, got his first newspaper job in San Francisco from Dalziel, and so he held always in his heart a glow of warmth for the man. Older was nineteen in 1876 when he wandered into the city a penniless printer. Occasionally, he slept in or on the lumber piled on the waterfront. One day he met Dalziel. They looked at each other and each recognized a kindred adventurer.

Said Dalziel in his soft British voice: "I have a job for you." So Older went with him into a fancy building on Commercial Street



between Kearny and Montgomery. Once this place had been a fine home, built, in fact, by a bonanza millionaire for entertaining visiting notables. More recently, the red lantern had been over the door.

In due time the ladies had been forced to move and had left behind the big mirrors, the plush chairs, the deep carpets and a scent of carnal sin. Since no one was paying the rent, it appeared to Dalziel as an ideal office for the *Weekly Mail* he was about to publish. Older, the merry fellow announced, was to be foreman of the print shop. That would place the nineteen-year-old boy over twenty printers, for Dalziel was gifted with goodly ideas, and, busted as he appeared, with unexplained sources of revenue.

Dalziel was tall and elegant and brilliant and the clichés of "handsome and dashing" fitted well. In Australia he found the beautiful Dickie Lingard, soubrette, sister of William Horace Lingard, famous actor of the day. Dalziel bent a finger to Dickie and she stopped whatever she was doing at the moment and rushed to the preacher. It was just that fast—a story-book romance that lasted fifty-two years, through rough and smooth, poverty and riches.

"The first edition of the *Mail* caused some wonder among the quidnuncs," said Historian Jerome A. Hart, "for young Dalziel apparently had no money."

Fremont Older thought the first several weeks were carried by the pawning of the beautiful Dickie's jewels. He said that after these first weeks there were only a few dollars to be divided among the printers, and everyone was rather huffy. Advertisers had little use for the *Mail*, and Older added there was no mystery about that for it was a bad newspaper—"not stupid, but just sort of unorthodox." The printers sat around, refusing to work "until filthy lucre gave off an odor again." Dalziel disappeared then for a few days, and the printers were resignedly folding up their aprons when he came back.

He stood upon a chair and gathered the men about him, his face flushed, and his eyes sparkling. He wanted to get as much out of the drama as possible. He suddenly whipped a buckskin sack from his coat pocket, held it high, gave it a gentle shake. It clinked! Gold pieces!

"If you gentlemen will come into my office, please," he said, and turned and led them there. Then he called for all the bills and set

them out on his desk and placed upon each the small pile of gold pieces it called for. The printers then passed one by one and were paid.

Again he gathered the men and climbed the chair.

"Gentlemen," he said, "the *Weekly Mail* is dead. But in its place will appear the *Daily Morning Mail*. From its first issue I shall make it the brightest and best newspaper in San Francisco."

The men gave a cheer and filed back to work, and on the second morning the *Daily Mail* was born.

The proprietor, already known as Dizzy Dalziel, promptly scooped in all the writing talent in the city. He paid high wages. He got the famous Arthur McEwen, later to be Hearst's chief editor and severest critic. He had John Paul Cosgrove, S. F. Sutherland, Dan O'Connell, Will L. Visscher, John H. Henry Goddard, Charles B. Flannagan, Charles J. McCarthy, John St. Muir, Thomas E. Flynn, each to be noted newsmen in San Francisco and, later, in New York. He got all these experts because he came out of his disguise and told whom he had tapped.

This was Mark McDonald who had made a killing on the bull market and had so much money that he backed an opera house at Third and Mission Streets for Adelina Patti who would not come out West to sing unless she had a nice big place in which to do it. (The sheriff later got the place, often.) McDonald was a fellow who had been stung by the political bee and thought he had a lot of salve for it. He wanted to be United States Senator and was sure that control of a newspaper meant control of the Legislature. In those days senatorships were still handed out to the men who could work up the most good will among the legislators. So McDonald gave Dalziel a pile of money to engender good will through the right publicity.

The first issue of the *Morning Mail* was a sensation that won loud applause in a city noted for melodrama. The lead story of this first edition is one still being told throughout the world. Arthur McEwen wrote it, Fremont Older said. He wrote it because news was light and Dalziel wanted something smart to impress the natives. Dalziel said he did not care whether it was accurate. So the clever McEwen sat down, had a pull or two at the bottle near his ankle and brought



forth, without labor, the story of a suicide attempt at the Cliff House.

A young man, whose fictitious name is a legend now, was desperately disappointed in love. So he decided to go to the cliff near the Golden Gate and end it all. He wanted to make a sure thing of it. So he took with him a rope, a pistol and bottle of poison. He fastened the rope around his neck and the other end to a boulder. Then he stepped to the edge of the cliff and swallowed the poison.

As he jumped, in order to make his death certain, he fired the pistol at his head. The bullet missed, but cut the rope. He dropped into the sea. The salt water he swallowed made him sick and his stomach rejected the poison. And he would have drowned had he not been a good swimmer.

The story, being new, startled the town, and the *Call*, *Post*, *Bulletin*, *Examiner*, *Report*, *Alta* and *Chronicle* called in their police reporters for an explanation. They could not find a record of this event, and had to say it had been a story picked up by lucky McEwen from the subject himself who had not notified the police. Dalziel roared with laughter. He was so pleased at the success of the story and the talk it had created that he took the entire staff to dinner and toasted Author McEwen until dawn.

Meanwhile, the reporters tossed their hats on the heads of immodest French statues and wrote their copy on baroque mahogany tables with skinny legs, the working printers moved beside their reflections in large wall and roof mirrors, and alongside the presses were rolled strips of rose-colored heavy carpets taken from the floors.

Such a happy newspaper could not die quietly in its bed, murmuring of its proud past; nor exchanging blows in a final scene with the sheriff's men who had come pounding at the door.

McDonald didn't impress the 1877-78 Legislature, which selected a genial character known best as "Champagne" Charley Farley, host at big and very wet parties in the capital. At least, that was Older's story. For days after his selection as Senator, Farley and the Legislature swam. Disappointed McDonald went back to shearing the lambs and recouped all he had given to Dalziel, but he no longer had the impulse to toss large bundles of money into the maw of the gobbling creature called the *Mail*.

Soon after, a strangely warm day came to San Francisco. For the city's temperature to get above 68 degrees in any season is considered a sin. But here it was, almost 85 and men had to work!

At one o'clock that afternoon a merry reporter came into the local room and walked along the deep carpets dragging a three-gallon tin bucket with a large chunk of ice in it. Also this man, who apparently had three or four arms, carried four quarts of claret, a package of lemons, a small sack of sugar and a tin dipper. He placed the bucket in the center of the large polished dining table for which—up to this time—no one had found any particular use. Then as a few of the idle reporters gathered, he poured the four quarts of claret into the bucket and crushed the lemons and mixed it all with a pound of sugar. Then he took a long swig of the stuff, and sighed: "Fair for a fair day!"

No one agreed exactly about this. Another writer, stepping in from a story, declared it was not quite right.

"What it needs now," he said, "is some brandy. Then it will be nectar for the gods."

He disappeared, to return later with three quarts of brandy. He got it, Older said, from the same trusting bartender who had provided the original claret. This was tested by the experts, who thought it rather good, until Dalziel showed up. He sampled.

"Boys," he said, "I think it needs just a touch of champagne."

So Dalziel, being the boss, sent the printers' devil to the same barkeep. It was not just a touch of champagne but three quarts. When they were added, it was declared perfect.

"By this time," said Older, "the entire staff had arrived as if drawn by a magnet. They were all gathered around the bucket awaiting their turn. The bucket, when the champagne was added, was brim full. Slowly, dipper by dipper, the tide went down. One by one each man succumbed. At dusk the staff was strewn around the local room like poisoned flies—dead to the world."

It apparently was Older's off day on drinking. He was the only sober man in the place. When six o'clock arrived, time for the first copy to be set, he dragged a protesting reporter to his feet and yelled the situation into his ear. That fellow leaned against the wall and reached for scissors and began to clip all exchange papers within

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reach. He handed the clippings to Older, and in a grand manner as befitted the man of top command at the moment, ordered them set—and promptly fell on his face.

Older set the clippings as fast as he could. Later he called in a few printers from afternoon papers to help him. The *Mail* came out the next morning without a single word of local news. It was a strange mixture of happenings in Chicago, New York, Philadelphia and London—most old, some new.

"I think," said Older many years later, "that hot day and the bucket of punch finished the *Mail*."

Circulation took a tumble the next day. Dalziel in a few days said he could not pay the men—the paper was through! Tom Flynn, the most violent-tempered of the reporters, demanded his money and there were the usual words of such occasions. Dalziel spoke back, and when he left the building later Flynn followed him into Commercial Street. Here Flynn swung on the editor. Dalziel caught it squarely in the eye. His monocle flew into bits and the silk hat rolled leisurely down the slight incline of the street. Dalziel fought well. He got one on Flynn's nose that slowed him up. The next day the nose was like a potato. They were quickly separated, and years later both agreed it should be called a draw. It was the *Mail* that had taken the count.

## CHAPTER XXIX

# Sarah Althea Hill Sharon Terry

THE inevitable story of the multi-millionaire and the clever mistress who had been scorned and wanted balm came into the receptive hands of the San Francisco newspapers in 1883. It was their first chance to roll in a luxurious scandal that was so sure to befall them in the land of rugged, earthy millionaires and pretty, ambitious women. It burst into bloom in October of 1883 when United States Senator William Sharon, Comstock Croesus, owner of the fabulous Palace Hotel, brought suit to have Sarah Althea Hill desist from her claim that she was his wife.

"Old Sharon," also known during the trials as "that horrid, horrid man," was sixty-two years old, "of great human frailty, infirm in virtue!" Sarah was a sweet thirty-five, and smart and shrewd and yet sexually careless. Two years before, hoping to pique a worn-out lover's interest, she had taken a small draught of laudanum in his office—and been ignominiously pumped out at a hospital. More

recently she had been showing lawyers and others an alleged contract of marriage signed by both herself and Sharon. It was this document that Sharon, through his counsel, now asked to be declared a forgery and destroyed. His action had really been made necessary because Sarah had had him arrested and charged with adultery. To his suit, Miss Hill countered with one for divorce and alimony.

The testimony was rich in lusty vitamins. First off, Sarah produced the document with the signatures and the amateur-lawyer language in it. It was a sorry-looking thing, all stains and creases and burned marks where a hot iron had been run over it. The Sharon attorneys advanced the theory that at some time "when William and Sarah were fooling around" she had got him to place his signature on a folded piece of paper. Then she had, they said, unfolded it in private and written the agreement above the signature. Sharon's handwriting experts testified that the ink of the signature and that of the body of the agreement were not the same.

Then the woman produced a series of "Dear Wife" letters, most of them showing evidence of erasures and untidy, rewritten lines. Sharon denied all the written documents, but he was unable to say his actions with the lady, whom he called "Allie," had been platonic. She had been, he admitted, on his payroll at \$500 a month for more than a year, had been finally paid \$7,500 to go away and give another woman a chance.

At this, Sarah Althea told her side of being an old man's darling. She was, she said, "a gathered rose." All this happened in the days when the Palace Hotel glittered as a bonanza inn, into the center of which carriages drove and guests stepped from the four-wheelers into the ornate lounge. Above the central court was a series of overhanging balconies. Sharon also owned the Grand Hotel.

The Grand was not an important hotel—but it had a bridge connecting it with the Palace across and above New Montgomery Street. This enclosed archway was important, for Sarah lived in the Grand and the Senator lived in the Palace—and in the small hours it was customary for the pretty young woman to gather her full skirts and flit across the bridge. Sharon's suite was on the next floor above; he was a widower and in attendance upon him was only one person, a most discreet Chinese named Ah Ki.

For this Allie got \$6,000 a year, but all during these earning

months, she was scheming to have Sharon marry her. She began using "mediumistic and spiritual consolation, soothsayers, necromancers, fortune-tellers and witches." This was done, it appeared, upon insistence of one of the most sinister of all San Francisco women characters, Mary E. Pleasant, better known as Mammy Pleasant, a tall, gaunt Negress, who wore a spotless white apron and a black Quaker bonnet and sometimes, when chilly, a dark red blanket over her shoulders. She was, years later, to be the leading figure in the mysterious case of the strange death of Thomas Bell, eccentric millionaire in whose household she had been for many years a chatelaine.

Now Mammy was the guiding spirit behind the action of Allie who wanted to marry a millionaire, just like many a girl before her. Mammy was efficient, or thought she was, at voodoo and charms. She had aided Miss Hill for many months in her efforts to get the Senator to be more matrimonially serious. Sarah got from one voodoo priestess a concoction of poppy and "comparity" leaves that almost knocked "old Sharon" out when it got into his coffee. Then, on orders, she wore for some weeks two of Sharon's sox, dipped in brandy, around her left leg above the knee. Nothing happened then, either, so she was instructed to kill a pigeon and cut out its heart and stick nine pins and needles into it. She operated on a bullfrog in the same manner. She paid a gravedigger a silver dollar to permit some of Sharon's clothes to be buried under a coffin. It was all discouragingly futile.

In fact, Sharon, growing weary of her annoyances, made the closing deal of \$7,500. She took the money but continued to crawl into his room over the transom or sat before his door all through the night. At last, Sharon told the manager at the Grand to get rid of her. He gave her notice, whereupon she barricaded herself in her room. Once she left the door ajar for a minute and waiting hotel employees pounced. They worked fast—took the door off the hinges and walked away with it. Still she stayed. Then the men came and pulled the carpets from under her feet. Insulted, she walked out of the hotel—without paying her bill—and got a lawyer.

So came the court business upon which the newspapers fell with joyful sounds. The papers carried column after column for many months, and "that horrid, horrid man" became one of the best-

known millionaires in the West, if not the United States. Sarah's suit for divorce was granted in the state court; the Federal court almost simultaneously declared the marriage document a forgery. A few days before the decisions, Sharon died. All was confusion and remained so until 1888.

At that time, the Sharon heirs petitioned the federal court to make good on its decision, and all was lawyer-business again. During the taking of depositions, Allie took to bringing her revolver and placing it on the counsel table. It was loaded, too. It had to be taken away from her all the time, until the referee took her into court for contempt. Here she proudly announced that she really did intend some time to kill one or two of the opposing attorneys and that she "could hit a four-bit piece nine out of ten times."

Meanwhile, former State Chief Justice David Terry, the bowie-knife man, who had defied the Vigilantes and who had later killed Senator Dave Broderick in a duel, married Miss Hill. This was in 1886 when he was 60 years old and she 38. When final decision was to be handed down he was her attorney. Stephen J. Field, Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court, had come from Washington, D. C., to announce the decision. He was an old and bitter political enemy of Terry. On September 3, 1888, Field solemnly reaffirmed the decision—the marriage document was a forgery.

Mrs. Terry arose and screamed: "How much did you get for that decision? You have been bought!"

Justice Field ordered her taken from the courtroom, and as United States Marshal J. C. Franks attempted to take her arm she struck him a solid blow in the face. Terry, yelling, "No man shall touch my wife!" rushed upon Franks and hit him so hard in the mouth that a tooth was broken off. Then the deputies came into play and Terry was knocked to the floor and finally dragged outside. Here he broke away and drew his bowie knife. A deputy, in turn, drew his revolver and thrust it into his face, shouting, "Come closer and I'll blow your brains out!" Terry was disarmed. Meanwhile, Mrs. Terry stood and screamed aimlessly for her satchel in which was a loaded revolver.

Field sentenced Terry to six months in the county jail and Mrs. Terry to thirty days. Both vowed in newspaper interviews that they would kill the Justice on sight.

On August 13, 1889, Justice Field came back to California to make

a decision again in the case. The Terrys had appealed his previous decision. Because of the Terrys' threats, Deputy U. S. Marshal David Neagle, expert gunman, once police chief of Tombstone, Arizona, when the hell-shooting Earp boys were there, had been ordered by the United States Attorney General to stay constantly at Field's side.

At Fresno, the Terrys got on the train, and when it stopped for a late dinner at Lathrop, Field and his bodyguard went into the station dining room. The Terrys followed. Sarah Althea spotted the Justice at once and immediately went back to the train. Terry then turned and saw his old enemy. He arose and went toward him.

Justice Field, seated with his back to the oncoming attorney, did not know that he was there until a huge fist struck him on the right cheek. Bodyguard Neagle looked up suddenly, drew like a cowboy, fired from the hip. The bullet went into Terry's heart. Terry grunted and fell backwards. He was dead when he struck the floor. Neagle was so fast on the trigger that he got in a second shot as the body was falling. His bullet clipped off part of Terry's ear.

Neagle, holding his smoking revolver before him, backed against a wall as the eighty diners arose and began to mill about.

"I am a United States Marshal," he announced. "I defy anyone to touch me."

Justice Field, still sitting in his chair, said, "Yes, that is right. That man assaulted me and my officer shot him."

Mrs. Terry had come running into the dining room, a satchel in her hand. She fell upon her dead husband and began to wail. Then she made a fumbling attempt to get the clasp of the bag open. The dining-room manager took the satchel and opened it. A loaded revolver was on top of the clothing. Neagle and the Justice had slipped away to the train.

Mrs. Terry followed the body to the morgue and never left it until the burial. At the cemetery she demanded space be left between the grave of her husband and his first wife. She wanted this plot for herself. It was to be, however, forty-eight years before she could occupy that space. In 1892, she went to the state insane asylum. There she died in 1937, aged 90. Mammy Pleasant had signed her commitment papers.



## CHAPTER XXX

# Young Hearst Takes Over

THE *Daily Evening Examiner* came into the calloused hands of practical miner George Hearst in 1880. This was the old evening *Democratic Press*, whose internals had been hurled into the street by a mob upon receipt of news that Lincoln had been assassinated.

Hearst, a diamond in the rough, wished to be Governor or United States Senator. He was not, according to rival editors, remarkable for the elegance of his manners and had a deep, abiding contempt for the conventionalities. As soon as he became a newspaper's proprietor, the new enemies swung bare knuckles. Extravagant stories began to appear about him, where before he had not been a subject of comment at all.

"He can take a candle and pick," said a competitor, grudgingly, "and go down a shaft and form almost marvelously correct judgments from what he sees. He chews tobacco, swears like a pirate;

murders the Queen's English, and occasionally raises the devil on his watch, as the sailors say."

The Sacramento *Bee* was not so kind:

"A few months ago there was a party at the Hearst mansion, and guests were being entertained by a song when Mr. Hearst entered in his stocking feet, carefully carrying his boots in his right hand while his left supported the regulation crooked cane. He looked neither to right nor to left, but glided through the apartment like a ghost, to the intense amusement of the guests."

The *Bee* also went on to say that his new *Examiner* was a steady drain, losing about \$250,000 within a few years. This, thought the *Bee*, was a costly price for a chance at a senatorship, but added that it understood Mr. Hearst was worth about \$20,000,000.

In 1883, Hearst took his first fling at politics, shooting high. He battled George Stoneman, wealthy cavalry hero, for Democratic nomination for Governor, losing on the seventh ballot. The Republicans had expected to win, the registration being in their favor, but they had misjudged the campaign issue. It was the Chinese labor question. Just before election, Republican President Garfield vetoed the Oriental Exclusion Act, and in went Stoneman.

Hearst had thrown full support of his paper behind the winner, and when the incumbent United States Senator died in office in 1885, Governor Stoneman appointed Hearst to finish out the term.

Hearst did a good job in the Senate. He announced himself as a practical man and carried out a battle for a number of reforms. When the term was up, the Democrats were in power in the Legislature—and he won another full term.

When young Hearst returned from Harvard in 1887, he asked his dad for the *Examiner*. In asking for it he wrote a letter that has since got into volumes of World's Great Letters. He knew sixty years after he wrote it that it was still a fine letter, for on March 4, 1947, he reprinted it in his many newspapers.

In that letter he tells his father first off that his *Examiner* is "our miserable little sheet." Then adds:

"I have begun to have a strange fondness for our little paper—a tenderness like unto that which a mother feels for a puny or deformed offspring . . . in fact, to tell the truth, I am possessed of the

weakness, which at some time or other of their lives, pervades most men, I am convinced that I could run a newspaper successfully. . . .”

Senator Hearst was convinced, too. He gave his boy Bill the newspaper, and a few million dollars with which to run it.

“My boy Bill” had been a mystery to his father. According to Lincoln Steffens, the old man said he just could not understand him.

“There’s only one thing that’s sure about my boy Bill,” said the Senator. “I’ve been watching him and notice that when he wants cake, he wants cake, and he wants it now. And I notice that after a while he gets the cake.”

The day young Hearst took over—March 4, 1887—is one of the most unusual days in the history of journalism.

Said Young Hearst in his first issue:

“The *Examiner*, with this issue, has become the exclusive property of William R. Hearst, the son of its former proprietor. It will be conducted in future on the same lines and policies which characterized its career under the control of Senator Hearst.”

This was a very small notice for such a big event.

The *Examiner* the young Mr. Hearst got was one of the world’s worst newspapers. It had practically no circulation, no advertising, no talent in the staff. It was even using a single web press, which meant only one side of the sheet could be printed at a time.

Within a couple of weeks, Hearst had installed cylinder presses, got rid of the deadwood staff, increased the number of the pages from four to eight, widened the columns by reducing the number on a page, cleaned up the type, threw sketches all over the pages (often as many as fifty on Sunday). He changed it from a Democratic organ to an independent and even began to trip up his father’s friends occasionally. He made Sam S. Chamberlain managing editor and began to spend most of his time in Sam’s eight-by-ten-foot office.

He was a happy young man and now and then he came out of his own office and stood at the editorial-room door. Then he put his hands on both sides of the frame of the door and, with a grave face, danced a jig. He also had trick canes, one of which whistled as he walked up Market Street.

Chamberlain had been with James Gordon Bennett for many

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years, and was a newspaperman of great experience. He had founded the first American paper in Paris, the *Morning News*, which soon turned out to be a real rival to the old *Galignani*, a daily printed in English by British interests. He liked stunts.

The dash of the young man from Harvard amazed the West, and staid editors of the long sentences and the dull clichés stood back and stared. They were so dumfounded at some of the antics that they had nothing to say, which was indeed a strange situation. Young Hearst almost from the beginning was too big for other editors to handle.

He was quickly gathering a staff that would never be equaled. Many of its members were, in later years, to go to other papers in the East to bolster up and become the nucleus of other great staffs. He soon had Arthur McEwen and his acid-dripping pen; the great Sam Moffitt, the bitter Ambrose Bierce, Alfonso "Blinker" Murphy, Winifred Black (Annie Laurie, first stunt girl), W. W. Naughton, Jake Dressler, Edward H. Hamilton, Charles Dryden, Frederick Lawrence, Robert Duncan Milne, William N. Hart, Charlie Michelson, Eddie Murphy, Ernest L. Thayer ("Casey at the Bat"); Gertrude Atherton, Edward Townsend (Chimmie Fadden), Joaquin Miller, Edwin H. Markham ("Man with the Hoe"); and, in his art department, Homer Davenport, Hayden Jones, Jimmy Swinnerton, Thomas Nast, T. A. Dorgan, Harrison Fisher and Bud Fisher.

Six weeks after he took over he gave the *Chronicle* a trimming when the Hotel Del Monte burned. He chartered a special train, filled it with staff writers and sketch artists and sent it to the scene. It returned in time to surprise and shock the city with a fourteen-page extra. It had banner heads, most of them written by Hearst. He was certainly startling San Francisco.

He startled it so badly that within eighteen months he had increased his circulation from a claimed 5,000 to a certified 55,610 daily and 62,505 on Sunday. This had seldom, if ever, been duplicated. Jerome A. Hart, editor of the *Argonaut*, in his recording of Hearst's early days, says that some of the credit for this amazing circulation rise must go to C. M. Palmer, the *Examiner*'s business manager. Palmer was part owner of the Minneapolis daily *Tribune*, he owned a profitable flour-milling trade weekly, several rural week-

lies in Minnesota, and half interest in a St. Joseph, Missouri, daily. He just knew how to distribute newspapers, and the fact that Hearst could obtain his services is a compliment to the young man's acumen and personality.

When Hearst sent his correspondent Klein to report the troubles at Samoa between America and Germany, which almost caused war, and to cover the latest famine in China and Japan's newest earthquake, he was being "so wasteful of precious money" that his rival editors predicted he would soon collapse. They should have taken, instead, a second look at his circulation and the advertisements that were blooming all over his pages.

His local features were not neglected. There were some wild campaigns: legislative scandals, hospital abuses, jury briberies, lower water rates and battles against Blind Boss Chris Buckley. He exposed the fact that the noted bank robber Jimmy Hope had been walking the streets for six months under protection of the police while being sought on indictments.

His circulation kept mounting, sometimes at 1,000 a week. He brought out a slogan, "There is no substitute for circulation." He opened branch offices. He chartered special trains to take his huge Sunday paper up the state.

He picked up Homer Davenport when he was a brakeman on the Northern Pacific Railroad, and made him world-famous as a cartoonist. He put Davenport in a small house on Ellis Street with his two gamecocks in a cage on the balcony. There the genius blossomed and his sarcastic cartoons began to be copied throughout the nation. In time, Homer Davenport was to have a stock farm of his own in New Jersey, filled with animals sent by the Shah of Persia, the Sultan of Morocco, Gladstone and many others. And finally, he would go to the *New York Globe* at a great salary and there draw tough cartoons against Hearst. Davenport did it for money, but it did not make him happy. He was very sad about being forced to caricature the man who made him. One day he asked a friend to intercede for him with Hearst, to say he was sorry. Hearst nodded quietly to the friend but made no commitments, but the next day he wired: "Dear Davey: Come home—Hearst."

Davey did come home—only to die in a few months.

## CHAPTER XXXI

# “Monarch of the Dailies”

IN 1889, the celebrated sub-title “The Monarch of the Dailies” appeared in the *Examiner* vignette and the paper went to ten pages daily. Most rivals in the city still were battling to maintain four pages. The “Monarch of the Dailies” had a story behind it.

Allen Kelly, noted New York newspaperman, came with his wife, Florence Finch Kelly, to San Francisco in 1889 when young Hearst was in his second year of ownership of the *Examiner*. Mrs. Kelly was, years later, to write her *Flowing Stream* book of memoirs, and in it she described Hearst as he appeared to her when she met him that year:

“He was then in his middle twenties,” she wrote, “tall, slender, good-looking, very blond with pink and white complexion and a little golden mustache, boyish and slightly diffident in manner and still a bit under the influence of the impish spirits of his youth.”

She said that the tall boy with the little golden mustache was such a good newspaperman that at the end of his first year of ownership he broke even. And made money at the end of the second.

Kelly came out to be city editor. He was a good friend of Arthur McEwen, author of the Cliff House suicide hoax story, and had got his job through him. McEwen was at the moment standing very high with Hearst. Kelly, however, could stand only a few days of city desk work for the exciting Hearst. He went into feature writing.

The *Examiner* had no library, or little intention of forming one, but Mrs. Kelly finally got an order to build a good "morgue." She spent four intense months at it and at last had piles of clippings, obituaries, biographies and pictures. Then she was called east, and when she returned was unable to find her library. No one seemed to have heard of it before. Then a new staff man, "Cosey" Noble, heard her asking about it.

"Oh, that stuff!" he said. "I found a lot of clippings and pictures and no one seemed to know much about them so I threw them into a wastepaper basket."

"Everyone," Mrs. Kelly wrote sadly, "was haphazard and chaotic and the usual comment concerning the staff of young Hearst was 'They're all crazy!'"

"Cosey," the morgue destroyer, whose correct name was Frank L. H. Noble, is the butt of a yarn about the editor who failed to buy from Kipling when the unestablished writer came through San Francisco from the Orient, en route to England. One day Kipling visited the *Examiner* office and was referred to "Cosey," then Sunday feature editor.

It is Mrs. Kelly's claim that Noble rejected the offering of Kipling because he considered the stories worthless. She said that "Cosey" boasted of it when the Britisher became so famous. Later, Noble took a heavy ragging from the staff who dressed the incident up to make it appear he had rejected stories that later got into the collection of "Soldiers Three." He may have done so. Kipling wrote these stories a few months before passing through San Francisco. Later, when the pressure got too heavy, Noble claimed Kipling had

submitted articles ridiculing the Irish workmen of San Francisco, which were, naturally, against any newspaper's policy.

"But knowing his methods," said the unforgiving Mrs. Kelly, "I don't think he bothered much to see what Kipling had to offer, nor did he have enough sense to know what was good or bad."

One day Hearst told Allen Kelly to find a bear for the city's school children, a very large one, and put it in Golden Gate Park as a gift from Hearst and his *Examiner*. All Kelly had to do was find it and bring it back alive.

Kelly had hunted and traveled the wilderness of North America and Mexico. A small, wiry man with a sharp goatee, he was known first as a newspaperman, next as a woodsman.

Soon he heard about a hefty grizzly that had been eating its way right through herds all winter in the Tehachapi range in Southern California. Kelly did everything in the grand manner that Hearst liked. He hired trappers by the dozens and trappers' helpers by the score. An elaborate camp was set up as if a famous general had come with his staff to sketch out a full-scale invasion. He had many special traps built, each a small log cabin sunk out of sight with a trick one-way door. Inside, the trappers put fresh meat each day.

The retinue waited three months. One day word came. The bear was in! And raising hell!

Kelly climbed atop the log cabin and made a hole in the roof, well out of reach of the waving paws of the animal. Through this hole, he dropped heavy chains with rings on them and after many tries succeeded in tripping the bear and throwing him on his back. With trappers now holding these chains tight, Kelly got another pair of steel rings over the other feet and finally spread-eagled the unhappy Monarch. It was then a job of courage to get a muzzle on the snout. Now how to get the bear, all bound round with chains, to San Francisco?

Kelly had a thing called a go-down built. This was a log sled, to which horses could be harnessed. At last the roaring bear was dragged aboard the go-down and the whole shouting contingent started down the mountainside to the railroad station.

Hearst was pleased when he got the word of the capture, and a freight car was on a siding by the time Kelly and his men got there.

Once inside the freight car, the muzzle was pulled off and after a while the two front paws were released.

The *Examiner* had told the world about the capture and the route of the train. Crowds came to the stations, creating a definite hazard. At every opportunity, smart alecks and yokels prodded the animal and sometimes drove him into a frenzy. Once he started on a hastily planned campaign to eat his way out of the car, and Kelly, always resourceful, ran around seeking a comb of honey, which he finally got. This was good licking for Monarch for a while, and when he was off guard, heavy timbers were worked back into the damaged part of the car.

When Monarch finally made San Francisco, a goodly mob was there. The bear was loaded on a beer truck and paraded and Monarch finally ended up in Golden Gate Park where he lived unhappily ever after. Into the *Examiner's* vignette went its slogan: "Monarch of the Dailies."

Meanwhile, young Hearst continued to have himself a time, with new makeup and new ways of writing news. He loved it, his staff loved it, and most of the readers loved it.

Over a column of warm testimony in a society divorce: TUT! TUT!  
And over another: RED HOT YET!

Over a news story: A SUNDAY SUICIDE BY A LOVESICK LOAFER.

He began publishing sheet music, one-half page on each Sunday. He developed a full sports page that was lively, with two-column sketches of the famous players. Practically without fail he had a sports story on Page One. He had political cartoons five columns wide and eighteen inches deep, also on Page One.

He had Winifred Black (Annie Laurie) fake a faint on Market Street and keep a time check on the action of the wagon that finally wandered up to take her away. It was a dirty old express cart and it stunk and the horses were old and slow and Mrs. Black wrote that had she been sick she might well have died long before getting help. She produced a fine assortment of adjectives about the service, and the public health director was a most unhappy man. The days of taking emergency cases to a hospital in any old cart that happened to be idle, including the patrol wagon, were over. A regular ambulance service was started.

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Chamberlain, the managing editor, was the power drive behind most of the stunts, but young Hearst was right there pumping the handle, too. Chamberlain occasionally went on stories himself. He was there when the royal family of Hawaii was deposed, and got the "true life story" of the queen exclusively for his paper. He liked to spend money as well as Hearst. During a court fight in Boston over a pioneer San Francisco millionaire's estate, Chamberlain took 17,000 words a day on the wire.

Chamberlain also had a keen appreciation for the bottle and was known occasionally to let his esteem get the better of him. Once, old-timers claim, A. B. Henderson, then editorial manager of the *Examiner*, wired Hearst, who was at the moment in New York:

"Chamberlain drunk again. May I dismiss him?"

Hearst promptly replied: "If he is sober one day in thirty that is all I require."

When fishermen became marooned on rocks outside the Golden Gate on a stormy day, Hearst told A. M. Lawrence and Edward Hamilton, his political writers, to demand that the Coast Guard brave the waves and make the rescue. The Coast Guard was really quite sensible about the whole thing. Its officers said the marooned men were all right and could well hang on without undue hardship until the height of the waves was reduced and rescue became a smarter idea. Hearst ordered his own men into the fray.

Allen Kelly and H. R. Haxton, a noted Australian swimming champion, hired a tug and went to the rocks. Haxton went overboard with a line, made the rock, and pulled other tackle to him. One by one, the fishermen were rescued. What a story for Page One! Washington has an unfortunate way of hearing about these things and there were several Coast Guard officers scuffing their feet on the carpet. Establishment of a life-saving station along the bay and beach was the result of that one.

Next Haxton was told to investigate the fire drills and rescue work on the bay ferryboats. He jumped off one and a reporter set up a cry of alarm—and timed the rescue, which was very long. There was also ungraceful behavior of the crew that made good reading and caused deckhands from then on to undergo seamanship tests be-

fore being permitted to work. Most of them, it was discovered, had never rowed a boat. Only 5 percent could swim.

When a train stalled in a snow shed in Northern California, Kelly took out a special train loaded with delectables. The train had a snow plow out front—and Hearst's free lunch was a big hit with the hungry passengers.

The *Examiner's* editors had Robert Duncan Milne take the Keeley Cure (he being a suitable subject) just to have him write his experiences in and out of purgatory.

Lawrence was sent on horseback along the Mexican border to find the leak by which "thousands of tons of opium" were coming into the States. He found plenty of openings and the government started plugging them. Hearst sent a balloon up with a young couple and a minister for a wedding several hundred feet above the city, and thousands gave them gifts; he had a reporter in old clothes make rounds of churches begging and then tell how he had been turned away.

The first libel suit was brought by Martin Kelly, Republican Party boss and city Fire Commissioner, who, the *Examiner* said, sold an old city fire engine to the gullible City of Chihuahua, Mexico, and failed to put the money in the city's till. The story was only 100 percent untrue, but Hearst let Kelly sue for \$100,000. There was only one speech made by fire-eating defense counsel W. W. Foot:

"Gentlemen, it is true that Kelly did not steal this particular fire engine, but, gentlemen of the jury, no matter what was said about the plaintiff, true or false, we hold that it is impossible to libel him."

Two juries held with the contention of the *Examiner*. Both times the higher court reversed the verdict. The third time, the judge instructed the jury to award Kelly one dollar. To the Mint went a reporter under orders, who demanded the sum in brand-new dimes. These were placed in a plush-lined box and taken to Kelly's home. The Fire Commissioner took it with a good-natured bow—and the reporter wrote a detailed story for Page One.

It was probably in this mood, too, that Hearst one day ordered published a story about a young English friend, Henry Norman,

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later to be editor of the London *Morning Chronicle* and a knight. Sir Henry was en route to the Orient and had brought letters to Hearst and been entertained by him. He tarried, however, for his monocle had fallen upon Aimee Crocker, not only one of the wealthiest debutantes of the West, but also one of the best-looking.

One day, fifteen or twenty young people (including Jerome A. Hart, editor of the *Argonaut*, who told the story) hired a steam launch and, after a ride around the bay, tied up at a Marin County beach. There were small sandwiches and large glasses of champagne. Going home, young Norman began a heavy flirtation with Miss Crocker. Suddenly he was on his knees telling her he could not live without her, that he would do anything for her—including jumping overboard at command. So Miss Crocker tossed her lace handkerchief over the side and cried out for its rescue. Norman dived right over after that handkerchief.

It was all very funny until Norman went under twice and was headed for the third down. All this for an excellent reason. He could not swim. The tugboat captain stopped and backed his boat and shouted a series of vexed remarks.

Two theories of rescue efficiency were held by eyewitnesses. Hart said the captain was very clever with the boat hook and finally caught it into the waistband of Norman's galligaskins. Another said the hook caught Sir Henry in the seat of his trousers and that he was hoisted up, head and feet hanging, without a small boat being lowered.

He was dropped on the deck like a soggy package, right at the feet of Miss Crocker. Here he bowed low and presented to the lady, with gallant gestures, the hankie he had somehow caught while thrashing around in the water.

The *Examiner*'s waterfront man got the story and, knowing Norman was the Chief's friend, brought the facts in before writing them. Hearst told him to make two columns of it and not to be too serious. And there were sketches, too, one of them favoring the principle that the boat hook snagged the seat and not the waistband.

The town loved it. Norman was much humiliated. He rushed to the *Examiner* to get a retraction, but Hearst was not around, and no one seemed to know just where the Chief was. When Hearst re-

turned, four days later, he faced Norman and said he was sorry for the dreadful things his editors did in his absence. He was going to make an example by firing his managing editor. Henderson took a few days off and Norman was satisfied and finally moved on, to become the great London figure.

All this was great fun, it can be imagined, even to a young man about whom Bierce wrote: "His personality suggested extreme diffidence. He spoke in a voice like the fragrance of violets made audible and then backed a little away." But Hearst was also a very serious young man. Many years later (1906) while being interviewed by Lincoln Steffens he said he did not consider his methods sensational. He called them "striking." About his plentiful use of crime stories he said:

"I thought and I think of such news as the tragedies and romances of life and as such they should be written. I must admit I have not often succeeded in getting crime treated as tragedies, but I have given orders, and my orders are posted in my newsrooms, forbidding even the word 'murder.' And men have been discharged for breaking these rules. I think that part of the fault for the failure is mine. If I had stuck to one newspaper I might by personal direction in detail have made a newspaper to suit me. But I started others in widely separated places, and of course I can supervise all of them only in a general way. I don't think my papers are so bad."

## CHAPTER XXXII

# Petey Bigelow Scoops the World

ON THE night of August 3, 1892, Chris Evans, John Sontag and George Sontag held up a Southern Pacific express train from San Francisco as it went down San Joaquin Valley. They intimidated the passengers and crew with a volley from their shotguns, blew up the baggage car with nine dynamite bombs, got three sacks of gold and fled on horseback. It was a Wild West thriller.

George was arrested by detectives at his home in Tulare. John Sontag and Chris Evans were not at home, and when they did arrive smelled the deputies and fled (in the detectives' buggy) under a shower of lead. The chase ended in a draw—after a series of gun battles in which Federal and state deputies were killed. The law had drawn a blank. Sontag and Evans were somewhere in the mountains. George Sontag had gone to prison for life.

On October 7, 1892, the *Examiner* startled the state with several

thousand words of interview with Sontag and Evans. The opposition papers claimed it a fake, but shortly there came an authentic letter to the *Examiner* from Christopher Evans, announcing the interview correct, except for some minor details.

Henry Bigelow, tall, slight, who wore a bang, suits made specially for him by Poole's of London, an elegant derby, a rose in his lapel, a big silk cravat, small Vandyke and large mustache, had done the job.

Bigelow was known to his fellow newspapermen as "Petey" because they thought that was the most frivolous name that could be tagged on him. Life to him, his contemporaries wrote years later, was a jest. He had always the flower in his buttonhole and a light cane swinging. When distinguished actresses, actors, musicians, authors or travelers appeared in San Francisco, Petey was on intimate terms with them in a matter of hours. He took them to dinner, sent flowers, showed them the town, saw them off at the Mole and kissed the ladies good-bye. There was a box at his disposal in the leading theaters, and each florist in town had him on his free list.

One day after writing a long article in the *Examiner* office, he threw down his pen, sighed softly and said:

"Gentlemen, I am tired of this grind. There are two things I am going to do right now—have a glass of beer and go to France."

He took the beer at once and left for Europe the next morning.

So it was difficult to believe the insouciant, foppish young man could have done the job of interviewing desperate robbers, upon whose heads, besides the murder charge, was a price of \$10,000 each.

When he walked into the *Examiner* office that day in October, the staff hardly knew him. He was in rags, unshaven, dirty, bleary-eyed.

"I am fatigued," he said quietly, "and if you fellows will trot along and mind your own business I have an interview to write with Sontag and Evans."

The next day, Bigelow was back in his fine raiment, his boutonniere restored, smoking his cigarettes which he took from a gold case that had several diamonds on it.

Bigelow had taken his derby and cane and gone on a train down the San Joaquin Valley and slipped off at a small station not far from the entrance to the King's Mountain region. He did not attempt to be privy about it. He asked the village bartender where he could

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find the fugitives, said he was a city newspaperman. The yokels played it straight. Who were Sontag and Evans? Bigelow the elegant sat for a few days on the sunny side of the station and got delightfully filthy, let his beard grow and his stiff collar wilt down past his Adam's apple.

One day a man sidled up to him and talked about the weather. The names of Sontag and Evans were finally mentioned and Bigelow went into his routine. He wanted a talk with the robbers, giving no promises except that he would never tell where they were. It was nothing to him, he said, whether detectives caught them or not. That was *their* lookout, not his. He would, however, guarantee that he would place their side before the public.

The stranger left without further conversation, and again days passed. Then two strangers appeared and said, "Come along." That was all, but Bigelow took his dirty self out of an old chair and followed. He came upon Sontag and Evans at last. Sontag, it developed, had on a painful new pair of store shoes. He had purchased them personally a couple of days previously in a general store in Modesto, taking his time at being fitted. Bigelow talked with the two robbers for the best part of two days. He slept that night with them in their cabin. They spoke freely, saying they were innocent, that the detectives had attacked them without provocation and they had returned the fire as all free human beings have a right to do in defending their homes. They were innocent, honest ranchers, driven into the wilds like animals. Now the time had gone for an explanation or a hope for a square deal. It therefore would be a fight to the death —two men against the world.

When June of 1893 rolled around, Sontag and Evans were still in the wilds, and Joaquin Miller went down to try for an interview. But once it is done, it is done, and whereas Petey Bigelow got about 20,000 words of hot copy, Miller got a spiritless chill.

Hearst apparently sent the poet with the misjudged idea that one can repeat a good thing. Posse were still keeping out of bullet range and it was thought that perhaps Miller, being a big, strong woodsman, could determine why the chase had become cool. Miller dallied around, and got to see Chris Evans, or at least so he said. The boys did not, however, follow his interview with a confirming letter.



When Joaquin returned himself and his sloppy clothes and his big feet into the editorial rooms of the *Examiner*, he had been sold on the proposition that both robbers were very fine gentlemen. He started his long article:

"Have we really got brigands in the Sierras? Have we really got one brigand of the first class? I think not."

Miller said he first went to the Sontag home near Tulare to make arrangements for a meeting. Miller was charmed by Mrs. Sontag and the seven little tow-headed Sontags. There was evidence about the home, he said, that it was the abode of an honest man. For one thing, the tablecloth was ragged.

When the dramatic Joaquin Miller interviewed the hunted man he was in a famous Redwood grove near Yosemite National Park. Working with directions from friends of the bandits, Miller at last stood beside the General Sherman big tree, the largest in the world, the poet hastened to remind his readers. He wandered around the big tree and nothing happened, and then he stopped in dismay. All the time he had kept his hands in his pockets! What an attitude while approaching the fastest trigger men in the robber business. Joaquin hastily removed his big hands from his pockets and thrust them straight into the air.

Miller was walking thus when Chris came from behind another big tree and held conversation with him. From what Joaquin got one might suspect that Evans was not too eager about the publicity and really a little bit bored.

Miller's opinion that Chris was a very fine gentleman was upheld, however, when the bandit told how he loved the big trees, some of which had been growing long before the birth of Christ. If Joaquin had been a more practical man and less of a poet, he might have realized that most bandits would have liked well to be hidden in a grove of big trees. The bigger the better to hide you by, dear Joaquin. But Miller thought Chris Evans was much like John Muir, because he was gentle and loved nature.

It was a crashing flop as an interview with a bad man. There were almost no quotations in it, and either Chris was giving none or Miller was too confused in the presence of the great man to take notes, or perhaps he had to hold his arms above his head *all* the time.

He did, however, bring back one graceful bit from the trek. Chris asked him to take a package to Mrs. Evans. He described it, just how it was tied by bark and what a neat job the little box was. Well, Joaquin Miller carried the box to Mrs. Evans and now it could be told: the bandit and murderer had sent to his wife two of the prettiest snow plants it had ever been the joy and thrill of Mr. Miller to see. And again, Miller repeats that anyone who would send his wife two nice little snow plants could not be a bad man. Months later the bandits decided to visit Mrs. Sontag and the seven children. Somehow their movement was tipped, and again a battle was fought at the homestead.

Sontag was badly wounded and died in jail July 3rd. Evans also took a terrific fusillade from the rifles of the posse. He had an eye shot out and an arm so shattered it had to be amputated. He got life imprisonment.

After Evans was well and he was still in the county jail at Fresno, he was helped to escape by hero-worshiping Ed Morrell, the waiter who brought in his food each day. The two were in the mountains for months, but Evans sought his home. Here he and Morrell were captured while asleep. Both got life. George Sontag was pardoned in 1908 and became a bouncer on the Barbary Coast. After Morrell was released the two went on a tour lecturing about how crime does not pay. Chris Evans, paroled in 1911, died in 1918, aged seventy, a shattered old man.

## CHAPTER XXXIII

# Half-Savage Chained to a Star

HEARST had the robustious Joaquin Miller around for some time, and he must have been a great source of entertainment for the blond young man who was having such fun with a newspaper, but as a journalist Cincinnatus Hiner Miller was noted mostly for his oddity.

C. C. Godwin, author of *As I Remember Them*, who knew Miller well, said:

"A head of gold, breast and arms of silver, but all the rest potters' clay. A half-savage chained to a star. Had he learned a little discipline in his youth who knows what he might not have achieved!"

Others did not say it as well, or as kindly.

His closest friend, the late Harr Wagner, wrote the best book on Miller, *Joaquin Miller and His Other Self*. Joaquin had been an early-day Indian fighter. In a four-hour battle at Castle Crags, Cali-

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fornia, in 1855—the last war in which Indians used only bows and arrows—Miller took an arrow through his cheeks, which knocked out some teeth and had to be pulled out by the feathered end after the head had been cut off. A few years later, he was charged with horse stealing and lodged in jail at Shasta. In the style to which he was already accustomed, an Indian maiden one night kicked in the jail-house door and took him away for her own.

Later, while in Washington Territory, he studied law and passed the bar. Also he rode Pony Express from Millersburg, Idaho, to Walla Walla, Washington. His interest in this route he sold to a partner. With the money, he started a newspaper in Eugene, which the government suppressed during the Civil War for being too outspoken. About this time he began writing poetry, and when Poetess Minnie Myrtle Dyer wrote to say she thought his verse displayed genius, he rode across the hills and married her within three days after getting her letter. Later they were divorced.

When Miller came lumbering down from the mountains to San Francisco he was a subject of shock even to the literary group that had got used to such vivid personalities as Mark Twain, Harte, Bierce, McEwen, Bigelow. Somehow he intrigued a publisher into issuing a tiny volume, *Joaquin et al.* There was one poem in it about Joaquin Murieta, the bandit. Ina Coolbrith, the poet, suggested he use the "Joaquin" for himself instead of the cumbersome *Cincinnatus*. It fitted his appearance:

Prussian mustache, long yellow hair, piercing blue eyes, large-rimmed Stetson hat with a tassel, a Prince Albert coat, high-heeled top boots. Often one trouser leg was in the boot and one was out.

He came to the literary center of San Francisco, then Montgomery Street, between California and Jackson Streets, and met the boys and girls. Millicent Shinn was running *Overland Monthly* at the time; Arthur McEwen was publishing a journal called the *San Franciscan*; Ambrose Bierce was working on the *Wasp*; Little Freddie Marriott had his *News Letter* in the block; the *Call*, the *Bulletin*, the *Post*, the *Report*, the *Examiner*, the *Chronicle*, *Vanity Fair*, the *Golden Era* were all near by. The literary lights gathered at Hans Hjul's coffee shop. Franklin K. Lane was there, about to leave



newspapering for high government office. Miller accepted his rights and took a job on the *Era*.

He wrote a column called *Bricks*, and Harr Wagner said it was a very good illustration of his plea for the use of short, simple Anglo-Saxon words. But Wagner was a good friend of Miller; most readers merely said they could not understand what he was talking about. Often he came up with what would be known many years later as Gertrude Steinish sentences:

"There are bricks of gold, silver bricks, bricks without straw, and bricks to be hurled at mad dogs. Ergo, bricks."

But in the column he did start the tree-planting business that got the school children into the sunshine at least one day a year when they went out and stuck saplings on Goat Island, now known by the effete name of Yerba Buena Island.

He pulled Editor John P. Irish, last editor of the *Alta California*, into the campaign. Irish was another wonderful character of that wonderful San Francisco. He had three great distinctions: he had been the Democratic candidate for Governor of Iowa, could make the longest speech on the shortest material of anyone in the city and never wore a necktie in his life. He was the man about whom a weary San Francisco cabbie said as he picked him up:

"Book characters, always, always book characters! I never get just people!"

Irish got himself all wound up, and, lashed by his driving energy, the city held its first Arbor Day, November 27, 1886. Irish was not the sort of fellow to hog the show and he gave full credit to Miller. He gave so much credit to him that when the school children got through planting Goat Island they petitioned to have its name changed to that of Joaquin Miller Island. By the next Arbor Day, the Oakland kids were in on it—and 3,000 of them planted trees all over the poppy hills that were to become Miller's home and where he was to build a special funeral pyre for himself.

For a reason probably not even known to himself, Miller named this spot on the Oakland hills The Hights. Elbert Hubbard, when he visited him, asked him why the spelling, and Miller gave the perfect answer:

"Because I like it spelled that way."

Hubbard got a longer but less concise answer when he asked him why he isolated himself in the hills:

"I have always known that I was a poet and that God had messages that He wished to deliver to me. I may not know all my weaknesses but I know some of them, and I know that the only way I could listen uninterruptedly to the Voice of God would be to come up here or to some other remote spot, where I could hear the Divine Voice without interruption."

Miller, in between his newspaper jobs, built with his own hands and from the natural rock on the place, a pyramid to Moses, a tower in honor of Robert Browning, a monument to General Fremont, and his funeral pyre. He wrote his own eulogy many, many years before he was to die and invited all the school children of Oakland to attend the funeral. Originally he had intended that The Hights should be a poets' sanctuary, but he didn't know the breed as well as the other newspapermen who cried out against the idea.

Joaquin, often easily gulled, thought the visiting poets would at least cut wood for the fireplace, but all those who came only communed and ate heartily. Finally, Miller got angry and stormed them all out of The Hights. It was a grand exodus, some running, some walking dignifiedly but hurriedly, some limping. When the last one had gone on down the trail to the end of the Fruitvale carline and their last vulgar words had died away, the sweaty poet put up a conclusive sign:

NO ADMITTANCE! THIS MEANS YOU!

Then he became his nice old self long enough to add on the bottom of it:

ANYWAY, THERE IS NOTHING TO SEE UP HERE EXCEPT DOWN  
YONDER.

Bierce and Miller could hardly be called friends, which is something of an ambiguous remark since Bierce had few, if any, intimates. They tolerated each other, each probably secretly admiring the other. Bierce would have liked to be as picturesque as Miller,



who would have liked very much to be able to purr and scratch as well as Bierce.

Bierce, picking on some obscure remark of Miller's, wrote a full page in the *Examiner* to prove the man a liar. Wagner, his editor at the moment, told Miller not to read the article because the only result would be to hurt his sensitivity. Miller, readily hurt, even without reading Bierce, said plaintively:

"Why did he bother to take a whole page to say I'm a liar? I will admit it in three words."

He added, in passing, that he was really not a liar, "Just a man who sometimes exaggerates the truth."

Wagner said Joaquin drank, which is like saying the old-time San Francisco newspaperman breathed regularly.

"But he drank like a gentleman," continued Wagner. "He was not a periodic drinker like Edgar Allan Poe or James Whitcomb Riley. He could not be persuaded to take a drink before noon, but from 12 o'clock and 3 p.m. and before dinner, he would enjoy immensely straight high-proof whisky. He always wrote in the morning when his mind had no physical stimuli and his other self was dominant."

In 1897, Bailey Millard, then Sunday editor of the *Examiner*, made a verbal contract to send Miller to the Yukon. The *Examiner* was to pay \$50 for a half page each Sunday. Miller otherwise was to finance himself. Hearst thought the Millard deal very excellent, and, the Klondike excitement beginning to hit it up, ordered the operation to proceed under his usual elaborate system. He sent a special ship with E. J. Livernash in charge. Miller and a gang of his news-hounds were to go in by way of the Bering Sea.

Miller, once landed on Alaskan soil, said he would not wait for a dog team and started over the Chilkoot trail in forty-below weather. He was fifty-eight years old. He had a pack on his back and knocked off his miles better than the young men. He wrote some clearly defined material, too, and his reports began to stir the West.

Some of his articles got back to New York and Pulitzer's *World* wired Wagner, who was acting as a quasi agent, asking for a second right in it—at \$50 a copy. Since there was no contract with the *Examiner*, Wagner wired acceptance.

It was discovered that the *New York Journal*, now in the hands of young Hearst, had advertised the same material—as exclusive. Hearst was furious. He wired A. M. Lawrence, then on the managing editor's desk of the *Examiner*, demanding Miller be tied up. Wagner tried to get Pulitzer to give up the column and was refused. So one of the first great battles over a reporter's work began to develop. It took a Hearst to beat a Pulitzer when spending was the desideratum.

Hearst announced to Wagner he would protect him in any law suit that Pulitzer might bring. He said he would syndicate Miller to the *Boston Globe*, the *Baltimore Sun*, the *St. Louis Republic*, and the *Chicago Tribune* and moreover pay \$95 a column.

"I canceled my agreement with the *World*," said Wagner. "I felt my obligation to let Miller make some money was greater than my obligation to the *World*. Then suddenly interest began to drop and the Livernash expedition turned out very expensive and Hearst did not go through with the agreement. Miller made \$6,000 on it when he should have made double."

That was a sort of keynote of Miller's life: *he should have made double*. There was a great talent in the wild man from the hills, but always something was happening that kept him from making double.

When he began his early newspaper career he was so glad to see his name in print that he gave away his poems, "under terms," said the *Chronicle's* John P. Young, "which did not involve the recognition of the counting room." Young did not think much of Miller and complained bitterly about his manuscript:

"Occasionally, the poet's copy was so bad it had to be relegated to the waste basket. That was the case with at least two letters of a series written from Europe. One of them, as nearly as could be ascertained, dealt with the origin of the search of Jason for the Golden Fleece, which he argued was not a myth but a real occurrence."

What Miller wrote from the Klondike was deciphered all right by Hearst editors, who were not beyond guessing at a word whose code could not be broken down.

All the editors of San Francisco, at different times, took a chance

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on Miller. Fremont Older, biggest gambler of them all, spotted him right off for what he was—and loved him dearly for it.

"One thing about Joaquin," said Older, "was that he was never a pretender. He just never pretended he didn't like whisky."

Older told stories with a cynical glint in his eye and he always smiled when he told about the bulky poet. The trip with the Livernash gang for the *Examiner*, he said, was a big success as far as Miller was concerned—at first.

When the Livernash party got to Seattle, the steamship company, it was discovered, had a rule that no one could proceed further north unless he had with him a six months' supply of grub. So all of the party gathered their six months of provisions except Miller who was gadding about somewhere until a few minutes before the ship sailed.

"I don't need provisions," he said. "I know how to get along. I'm an outdoor man. I know my way about." And thus he kidded the purser out of his order.

They were gathered on deck that night when a passenger pulled out a bottle and offered a drink around. Miller held up his big palm in horror.

"No! No! My dear mother said to me just before I left: 'Cincinnatus, you're going to a cold climate. Whisky is not good there. It will endanger your life. Promise your old mother that you will not drink.'"

He was big, and emotion is often poignant in ratio to size, so the rest of them got to thinking of Mom, too, and not a sip was taken. In fact, Miller put on such an excellent act that he was able to get each traveler to put his bottle in the care of Boss Livernash. And when midnight came, Miller and Livernash were still on deck and the others had gone to bed. Miller made a fast trip to his stateroom and brought back his carpet bag. Solemnly he opened his bag, removed his own dead ones and tossed them overboard, put all the live bottles in.

After the party landed and got above Dawson, the newsmen, because Miller had no provisions, had to organize a sort of Early Christian society in order that the ursine bard might eat. Each had to feel Christian as he sat there watching the Pilose Poet wolfig-

down the choice morsels. They demanded, however, that Miller be made to do the cooking. He had been boasting all the way up, anyway, that he was a great outdoor chef, and they thought the idea very good, too. He had made no secret about the proximity of food being a pleasant comfort to him at all times. The first morning he produced some very odd pancakes. Hunks of raw pork had been pressed into the batter. The boys gagged.

"Thought you were a cook!" they roared. "We're poisoned!"

One took a griddle and was on his toes trying to brain Joaquin with it when the others brought him down. Miller was not disturbed at all. He brushed them off as a St. Bernard might a hysteria of poodles. Then he calmly told them:

"I *am* a good cook, but I figured you would understand from my flapjacks that I don't want to cook."

The gang gave in and groaned. The doctrine of all-for-one was weakening steadily, but at the moment the big fellow was the star of the show and a favorite with Chief Hearst. Anyway, the party was breaking up soon and its members would not have to worry much longer about whether the lummox lived or died. Nor did they care much.

When winter started to close in, Older said, Miller was advised he should begin to take precautions. He pushed his advisers away.

"You seem to forget," he said, "that I am an old hand in the rough country."

The truth was that Miller had met there in Dawson an old friend from San Francisco, a businessman who had a cache of Canadian Club. He had settled down to enjoy a confab about poetry with the man from the old home town. One day he awakened to find everything ice. Miller yelled the loudest.

"Caught in a trap, by God!" he roared. "How did *you* let this happen?"

So, Miller caught the last boat out for Circle City. There he found no books, no friends, no Canadian Club. He began to talk about returning to Dawson, now many bitter miles over a dangerous trail.

"Don't be a fool. You'll die!" said the sourdoughs.

Miller got a dog team and started off with a tenderfoot he had fooled into thinking he was a great woodsman. The river was not

properly frozen, the trail a sloppy mess—a month later a team from Dawson found them. They were eating the last dog, Older said, and Miller's famous beard was frozen stiff.

When they dragged him on into Dawson, the old businessman friend from San Francisco was there, too.

"Any of the Canadian Club left?" said Miller.

"Yes, one bottle," said his friend, "and I guess you're entitled to it. Few men in history have displayed such courage to get a free drink!"

When Miller returned from the Klondike, he was busting out all over with health and had a complete fur suit with buttons of gold nuggets. He got them as gifts from miners who were free and easy and liked to have the big fellow around. He went on the Keith vaudeville circuit for a short time, reciting poems of the Frozen North. He was, of course, already widely known before he went north for Hearst. He had long before been to London to startle the quiet British with his mountaineer boots, red shirt, sombrero and real bearskin topcoat. There at Baron Houghton's reception, hearing that Lily Langtry was about to arrive, he went into a corner and wrote a poem for her.

When the "Jersey Lily" arrived, she halted at the door while Miller read his poem. Joaquin did it well, and as he ended he stepped before her with a basket into which he had thrown all of the roses arranged in the room. As she walked in, Miller made a path of the blossoms for her to walk upon. For the rest of the afternoon he sat on his bearskin coat in the center of the floor and sang Indian songs to Lily.

Many years later when Miller was dying on The Hights, Lily Langtry came to San Francisco and Harr Wagner told her about the poet's illness. She went with the publisher to The Hights, and Miller, near death, lay back and smiled and quoted, after the many years, the poem he had written that afternoon. Lily wept and said:

"Joaquin, many men have paid me compliments, and I have been extended many courtesies, but my greatest thrill was to walk down the steps of Lord Houghton's palace on the rose petals you scattered there before me."

In London, Miller had rediscovered his old San Francisco friends, Prentice Mulford and Charles Warren Stoddard. The three went to

the same boarding house. Mulford married the very pretty daughter of the household, and brought her to New York. Work was hard to get and soon the young couple were broke. In order to help out while her husband was hunting work, the young wife, without the knowledge of Mulford, posed in the nude for a noted artist.

Many years passed, and Mulford became not only a star New York reporter but one of the leaders in the Purity League. Even so, he remained a close friend of Miller, and when Miss Rose Cleveland, sister of the President, invited Miller and other writers to a White House reception, Mrs. Mulford went along. It was an unlucky day, for the artist for whom Mrs. Mulford had posed many years before was there. He recognized her, and, being one of the great cads of history, told the hostess:

"There is a woman who has frequently posed for me in the nude. Did you invite her?"

Miss Cleveland, according to Wagner, asked Miller to have the woman leave, and Miller stormed out of the place, roaring with most proper rage.

To carry the story to its tragic ending—and it was the basis later for Herbert Bashford's play "*The Woman He Married*"—Mulford heard about the business and faced his wife with it. There was nothing for her to do but tell the facts. Mulford, very strict, very moral and the epitome of conservatism, was found dead in his rowboat at sea.

Mrs. Frank Leslie, the publisher, said Wagner, paid Joaquin most generous sums for his writing. She liked him very much. In New Orleans they led the grand march at the opening of the Exposition. Many of Miller's books were dedicated to her and he said she was the inspiration for his poem "*The One Fair Woman*."

It was an infatuation, and Miller told her that if she ever married he would leave the country. She did marry—Willie Wilde, brother of Oscar. Whereupon Miller sent to Wagner, then in San Diego, a letter addressed to Mrs. Leslie. He asked in another letter that Wagner cross the border into Mexico and mail Mrs. Leslie's letter from there. This was done. Joaquin had kept his pledge.

Joaquin was a lusty, vigorous, hearty oak whose friends had expected him to fall with a crash. Instead he died quietly. The end

came on the afternoon of a winter day, February 17, 1913, after he had been unconscious for many hours. His wife Abbie, and his daughter Juanita, best beloved of all, were with him. Suddenly, Miller lifted himself on one elbow and said very softly:

"I am dying. I can not live. Oh, take me away, ye angels. Take me away. I hear ye. Pity me! Oh, pity me, John! John! Father! Father!"

He died so, calling for an old friend, John P. Irish, the editor, and his long-dead father.

He had requested cremation on the pyre he had built for that purpose, but the city officials forbade it. In May, however, friends carried his ashes from a crematorium and, as the sun sank through the Golden Gate, cast them on the pyre and placed a torch to the great pile of eucalyptus heaped there. Editor Irish, in his oration, reminded his friends "that the beloved savage was at last truly chained to a star."



## CHAPTER XXXIV

# Bitter, Bitter Bierce

THE story of Ambrose Bierce, mean, bitter, always angry, seldom dull, is best heard when one is in a pleasing fit of melancholy, for the Hearst columnist was an unhappy man. Fellow newspapermen hated him, he had few true friends and when he died in Mexico, perhaps by the carbines of Pancho Villa's men, more likely by his own determined hand, no one stopped to weep. George Sterling, the California poet, said he was Bierce's greatest friend, yet he wrote an article raking up, in any mood but a kindly one, much that could well have stayed in the bogs.

Years before Bierce had married the pretty Molly Day, to the consternation of her friends, and there were three children before they separated. One of his sons died violently and somewhat scandalously—and it is an axiom of the newspaper business that you treat

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your fellow-workman with velvet gloves and small notice when tragedy overtakes him. Now, however, newspapers opened up on Bierce, and even Frank Pixley, solid, sternly correct editor of the *Argonaut*, struck out viciously at the wounded man.

Some weeks before Bierce's son died so discreditably, a very young poet, David Lesser Lezinsky, sensitive and neurotic, had committed suicide. Bierce in his column had been mercilessly ridiculing the youth just before his death, and rival newspapers lost no time in accusing Bierce of inducing the poet's suicide. Now that his own son had died in a brawl, Bierce's attention was brought forcibly by rival newsmen to the secondary reward he had received for his bitterness toward another boy. Pixley, who had suffered long under Bierce's vicious attacks without reply, came now to Publisher Hart of the *Argonaut* and showed him an article against Bierce that he, as chief editorial writer, was planning for the magazine. Hart urged him to postpone it.

"He never postponed any of his attacks on me," said Pixley, "nor did the suffering of any of his victims cause him to relent. I will print it."

Hart was surprised, not alone because Pixley was a kindly man but also because he had made the usual mistake of believing Bierce had a friend. But the truth was that Pixley, like all the others who tolerated Bierce, secretly and bitterly hated him. Pixley had even fought alongside of Bierce when the latter was attacked by the husband of a popular actress whom Bierce had called in his column "a charming blackguard." Bierce thought it a kindly remark, but the husband did not and knocked Bierce through a glass door. It was Pixley who came to Bierce's defense and chased the husband out.

Now with Bierce's son miserably dead, Pixley wrote:

"May not the death of the younger Bierce teach the older man, his father, how sinister have been the bitter, heartless, and unprovoked attacks which he has spent his life in cultivating that he might the more cruelly wound his fellow men? Does there not rest upon this father the shadow of a haunting fear lest he may have transmitted to a sensitive and tender soul an inheritance which resulted in crime and death, while he was cultivating the gift of wounding na-

tures just as sensitive and tender, who had not the courage to end them in murder and self-destruction, but were driven to hide their sorrows in secret?

"We are too sincere an admirer of the intellectual capacities of this gifted writer not to regret that when his remains shall have been gathered for entombment in the grave of literature, nothing will be found . . . that was kindly meant, nor aught that was not cruel and cruelly intended. Upon his tomb may be carved this inscription, 'He quarreled with God, and found nothing in His Creations worthy of the commendation of Ambrose Bierce.'"

Newspapers recalled, without adequate point, that Bierce had at one time used the initials A. G., and therefore he was known at the Bohemian Club as "Almighty God" Bierce. It was given to him, said one newspaper, because of his "pontifical attitudes," and when he learned what he was being called hastily dropped the initials in signing articles.

Poor, angry Bierce! If ever he needed a friend it was in early 1900, following the nationwide row over his four-line verse in the Hearst papers:

The bullet that pierced Goebels' chest  
Cannot be found in all the West;  
Good reason: It is speeding here  
To stretch McKinley on the bier.

These four bad lines were at the bottom of his column of angry, ill-natured, irresponsible piffle called "The Passing Show." Apparently he had just thrown them in at the end of the column to fill out his allotted space.

Shortly before, William Goebels had been killed in a Kentucky political quarrel. He had been cheated out of election for Governor by crooked counting of the ballots. A newly elected Legislature had refused to accept the count and declared Goebels elected. As he entered the capitol to be inaugurated he was killed by a rifle bullet. He was sworn in as he lay dying. "Civil war" broke out and it was months before his lieutenant governor was sworn in.

Shortly after Bierce's dull verse was run, McKinley was assas-

sinated. Hearst's papers took a severe loss of circulation and popularity, but recovered as usual when the heat cooled.

The Bohemian Club discontinued its subscription to the *New York Journal* and *San Francisco Examiner* (where the verse had been published). Whereupon ten *Examiner* men, including the sa-  
pient Pop Hamilton and Ashton Stevens, resigned and walked out of the club. Hearst, hearing of the exodus, sent his resignation from New York. The ten got together with a few friends and founded the Family Club. But Pop went back into the Bohemian Club in 1906 and Hearst was re-elected in 1913.

Bierce was untouched by all the furor. His faiths and his loyalties were obscure. He was unfaithful to life itself, going out of it so mysteriously that a half dozen tales have grown up about his end in Mexico. Some say it was before the rifles of Villa's men, others that he died before a firing squad after being captured by the general fighting Villa. Hart believed he died by his own hand, that he held the right of self-destruction to be inalienable. The latter would be in closer keeping with his temperament. He had gone into what he himself termed "the good, good darkness."



## CHAPTER XXXV

# A Paper Dies A-Bed

MEANWHILE—on June 2, 1891—the *Alta California* died. Granny *Alta* had put aside her shawl for a shroud. When the oldest San Francisco newspaper cashed in her checks, she took with her the dust from which she was made: the *Monterey Californian*, first paper in the state; the *San Francisco Californian*, the *California Star*, the *Star-Californian*, the *Placer Times & Transcript*, the *Town Talk* and the *Morning Times*.

The *Alta* was a nice Victorian, but, as the British say, she had had it. Owner James G. Fair of the bonanza silver millions, gave her the final knock on the head. Fair had quietly purchased the paper in 1887. Just why he wanted the old light-weight is not clear. It was worthless even as a political shotgun, for his senatorship was from Nevada. But he had a hunger for things that were cheap, and the *Alta* was certainly that. Yet, when he failed to profit from his un-

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healthy old bargain, Fair killed the *Alta* rather than lose face by selling it at a loss. He had pride only in his gains.

When Editor John P. Irish got the brief note ordering execution, he wrote the word *finis* on a piece of paper and continued with the last editorial:

" . . . Its existence began with the American occupation of this state and its files contain a record of all the principal events happening throughout the world since the discovery of gold by Marshall at Coloma—and in passing away, leaves an honorary past. . . . The course of appealing to good morals and good sense and the refusal to pander to the criminal and profligate has resulted in our financial failure. . . . The publishers can only regret the public did not exhibit a greater appreciation."

When the dirge was sung, the *Bulletin* merely looked the other way, not hearing a word. The *Call*, indecently rich, was as ungracious as could be expected of a parvenu:

"The *Alta* did not die of a surfeit of decency, principles and courage. . . . This is farcical. . . . This remark is a whine. . . ."

The *Chronicle* also kept silent. Hearst's *Examiner* sighed loudly and solemnly accepted culpability for the base deed of murder. An editorial admitted "blood-guiltiness," claiming the *Examiner*'s modernity had caused the *Alta* to starve to death.

"The death of the *Alta*," said the *Examiner*, "is a painful reminder that the pioneer days are gone forever. It continued to offer a newspaper of 1851 to the public of 1891. The *Examiner* is not without blood-guiltiness of its own. When the rejuvenated *Examiner* published column after column of special overland and cable dispatches—and this old-time publication used the mail—the end was in sight. The *Alta* had to modernize or die. The former was distasteful—perhaps impossible—the latter was easy and natural. Rest in Peace!"

It was true that Hearst was modern. He was already looking toward a hierarchy, casting his ambition-buttered genius all over the landscape. While he would in time wander far away, he never for a moment would forget his first-born, the *San Francisco Examiner*. Other Hearst editors watched it for style changes, for policy, for new features, always rushing to hop on the wheel of fortune for the next spin.



Long before he got his second paper, however, Hearst had set a style of exploitation that would never change during his lifetime. He had learned to be timely, to strike while the metal would mold under his hammer. Readers liked big names and big names were news—even if big names were acting in a most commonplace manner.

When Sarah Bernhardt started on one of her early-nineties tours across the United States, Hearst's San Francisco men made a great many plans for her. She was to go on trips to hospitals, charity institutions, excursions on the bay, receptions at the Press Club, and, most naturally, visit the *Examiner's* unkempt office.

Divine Sarah knew nothing about this, nor did her manager or anyone else in her entourage. Therefore when she picked up a Salt Lake City newspaper and discovered she was to do all these things, she was both puzzled and annoyed. She was always irritable, and when she saw what she was supposed to do she tormented into one of those rages for which she became famous shortly after becoming famous. She announced in her lovely French that she was *not* an elephant in a circus. This remark was duly wired to Hearst and he raised his eyebrows and telephoned Sam Davis at Carson City, Nevada, where he was publishing a paper. Sam was a greater story-teller than his brother Bob, the inimitable Munsey editor. He, also, was an intimate of Hearst and had worked for him.

Sarah's train arrived at Reno and Sam dragged his hefty body aboard where he introduced himself as the special man from the Hearst organization. His job, he said, was to look after her. All Sarah had to do was announce her wish. She did. She wished him to get away and stay away. It was a freeze that chilled off most of the state of Nevada and part of California.

Sam sat down behind Sarah and began unrolling his famous yarns to Sarah's manager. They were good stories, well-seasoned and silk-smooth from much telling. The manager roared with laughter. One or two yarns were undainty but neat, and Sarah, straining as hard as was polite for an angry woman, couldn't catch the best parts.

Finally she turned and petulantly demanded Sam to repeat an ending her ears had failed to catch. Davis, purring, picked up his 300 pounds and dropped beside her—and then the yarns *were* spun. When the train reached San Francisco, the proud beauty, Sarah

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Bernhardt, had agreed to place herself in the clutches of the *Examiner*. So the *Examiner* wrote thousands of words about Sarah, as she did the smooth tricks. And as she did the tricks the line grew longer and longer at the box office, and the *Examiner* sold more and more copies.

While Hearst and his *Examiner* with its glamorous stunts and campaigns built a newspaper empire, M. H. de Young and his determined *Chronicle* steadily fought to build a city. Hearst was spreading across a continent; de Young sat down in one spot to create a small paper into a great one, keeping pace with the growing pains of his city.

In 1888 "M. H." obtained the flourishing corner of San Francisco: Market and Kearny Streets. He got it from a grouchy old fellow named J. C. Johnson, who didn't want to sell it to anyone. Young Bill Hearst had entered into a rental lease with Johnson for the corner for \$1,900 a month, the owner to put up a building, but irritable Johnson refused to sign unless the signature of Senator Hearst, who held the strings to the money bags, was on the document.

When the irascible old men met to sign the papers, both immediately started to work the other over with the bludgeoning business methods of the day. The Senator said Johnson was a robber, holding up his Bill that way. Johnson replied the Senator would steal a blind man's pencils—and, in the heat of the words, tore up the lease.

When de Young heard the glad tidings about the quarrel he rushed to see Johnson, for he had had his heart set on that lot for years. Johnson met him gruffly, but finally agreed to sell—if de Young could meet his price, \$250,000.

"I had only \$8,000 to buy this quarter of a million dollar property," said de Young in his notes, "but I just had to have it."

One bank gave him a \$50,000 loan, the second \$200,000. This mostly on his word. Back with Johnson, de Young, on general principles of good business, argued \$10,000 off the price.

"I made just \$10,000 with a few minutes' speech," he said. "Later I found a neighbor's line was twelve inches over on my property—and that was another \$10,000, the price I was paying for a front foot."

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On the property de Young built the new home for his *Chronicle*, the first skyscraper in the city—ten stories and a clock tower.

It was this building before which mobs stopped on the night of November 5, 1905, and jeered at the paper because it was on the wrong end of election returns. It had been fighting the Schmitz-Ruef gang and had lost the election that day. Now the paraders threw skyrockets into the air. Soon the clock tower was afire and great damage to the building was done. The victorious party had added injury to insult. The *Examiner* gave over its presses to its rival. The *Chronicle* did not lose an edition.

As years went along, de Young saw his much-beloved son grow into a progressive newspaperman and share his short time with a city he sincerely loved. The son had been named for his uncle, Charles, and was born with a great affection for the smell of printers' ink. His news instincts were excellent. He was a pleasant, handsome man with a quick intelligence that belied his carefree attitude. It was at his suggestion that Luisa Tetrazzini sang on a street corner in San Francisco, Christmas Eve, 1910. She did it because she wished to thank the city for giving her a start in opera.

Madame Tetrazzini, then at the height of her career, sang at the entrance to the *Chronicle* building before a mob estimated, according to newspaper imagination, as being between 100,000 and a quarter of a million. No count could be made, of course, but it was a beautifully clear night and pictures show the five blocks that converge there to have been jammed. It could well have been 100,000. She sang "The Last Rose of Summer." Today there is a tablet on the fountain in memory of Lotta Crabtree, pioneer actress, which says that Tetrazzini sang there. She sang on a platform at the door of the newspaper building—about twenty feet distant—and it was reported in the memoirs of Managing Editor Charles P. Young that the *Chronicle* is "not happy about the municipal pettiness that caused the tablet to be misplaced."

Charles de Young violently promoted pageants and celebrations. He was responsible for the renewed interest the paper took in sports. He led the sixteen reporters and photographers who covered the Johnson-Jeffries fight in Reno in 1910. He had Jack London and Rex Beach in his party. At the end of the fight, his special train was

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given the highball for San Francisco, with photographers developing and printing in a special car and reporters batting out their copy in another.

The fight ended at 3 P.M. and by 10 o'clock that evening the prints were in the *Chronicle* office in San Francisco. (The trains do not make the run that fast now.) The special edition carrying sixteen halftones of the fight, including the knockout, went back on the same train and was sold on Reno streets at dawn. Charles de Young had worked the plan out personally, and because of his enterprise 40,000 words of description of the battle were in that special edition.

It was evident that the chip off the old block was going to be a big stick in the newspaper business. He was lively and fast and when a big story came into the office, he rolled up his sleeves and took charge. There was a sentimental side to him, too. He developed again the newspaper's interest in charities, the Children's Hospital entertainments, establishment of the Remedial Loan Association (a successful effort to thwart the voracious loan sharks) and many others. His sudden death, therefore, from typhoid on September 17, 1913, was a shock to a city that was now watching the rise of another brilliant young editor. The nation's press paid homage. Local rivals who had spent years crying out bitter tirades stopped to place a wreath on the coffin of the young man who had shown such editorial genius. He was de Young's only son.

And so the years had gone along, the good and the bad, the happy and the sad; years in which de Young grew quieter, more mellow.

In 1923 he took his paper into a fine, modern building at Fifth and Mission Streets. Into it he moved, inch by inch, his old office from the Market and Kearny Streets building. It is there today, carved oak panels, mahogany desk, straight-backed visitors' chairs, the cases of his curios, the narrow door through which one must step sidewise. All these are still there in an office now used by George T. Cameron, the husband of de Young's eldest daughter, a wealthy businessman into whose capable hands the *Chronicle* was placed by provisions of a complicated will.

De Young died quietly on February 15, 1925, and there was no funeral falsity when the city announced it had lost a citizen of ple-

nary rank. His will placed the proprietary interest of the *Chronicle* into the hands of the four daughters: Mrs. Cameron, Mrs. Joseph Oliver Tobin, Mrs. Ferdinand Thieriot, Mrs. Nion R. Tucker, with provisions for inheritance into the second generation. The operation of the paper has been placed in the hands of Paul Clifford Smith, now editor and general manager.

Smith was twenty-six years old when he became executive editor of the *Chronicle*. His background is just as unorthodox as his newspapering. He graduated from high school when fourteen years old. Instead of going on to college, the impatient, red-headed Smith hopped a freight and went into the wheat fields of Saskatchewan. Then he rode, still by freight, to Ontario, where there was supposed to be gold, which Smith did not find. Back in the West, he worked up and down the Pacific Coast in the woods as a high-rigger, choker-setter, rigging slinger, pole chaser and hook tender.

He also tried some prospecting in the Mojave Desert and did a few months in the Utah and Pennsylvania coal mines. In 1927, when eighteen years old, he was broke after months of hitchhiking, and stopped off in Ashland, Oregon. Here he got a few businessmen to set him up in a sports goods store, where he gave golf lessons to aid sales. He learned his golf then and there, out of a book. In a year he saved \$1,000, and pulled out.

In 1930, the Anglo-California Bank sent Smith, then twenty-one, to New York to become resident manager of its bond office. The salary was \$6,000 a year, the first real money Smith ever made. In the summer of 1931, he was making \$18,000.

However, in the same year, he heard of a job in the *Chronicle's* financial department, and got it, after winning a lengthy argument with the managing editor, who said that only a crazy man would drop an \$18,000 a year job for one paying \$100 a month.

Smith became assistant financial editor, didn't like the department boss and quit. While in Europe free-lancing and interviewing Mussolini and Hitler, he got a cablegram. The *Chronicle's* financial editor had died—would he like the job? He made the first boat out.

Herbert Hoover got interested in the new financial editor, whose stuff was appearing on Page One all the time. He offered Smith a

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job as his personal secretary. Smith liked Hoover and saw a chance to do some research at Stanford University, where Hoover lived. He asked release from Publisher George T. Cameron (who, he thought, did not know he was on the paper). Cameron had, in fact, been watching him. He placed Smith in full charge of the newspaper.

In 1939, Smith turned down a request that he run for mayor. It was backed by a petition with 40,000 names on it. In the same year, he received the Distinguished Service Award of the California Junior Chamber of Commerce. Later, he was named as the Nation's Outstanding Young Man of 1942 by the United States Chamber of Commerce.

On the day of Pearl Harbor, Smith, a Naval Reserve officer, was called up. In the midst of the war, he announced that since he was a lieutenant commander and yet could not run a destroyer, he wanted to quit and join the Marines as a buck private. This, by special order of Navy Secretary Knox, he was permitted to do. He passed the tough sergeants at Parris Island; became a lieutenant. The action he was seeking caught up with him at Bougainville, where he went in as a replacement officer. He engaged in knife fights in the jungle blackness with infiltrating Japanese. During the assault on Guam, his platoon hit the beach with the first wave. He had action enough to hold a soldier for a long time. The platoon casualty percentage was extremely heavy, but Smith, a bullet hole through his holster, was still on his feet at the end.

Weeks later, sudden orders came for him to fly to Washington. There, in another surprise move, he was made a full commander in the Navy. He ended the war ducking Kamikaze.

Now the *Chronicle* continues to carry out the wishes of the founder, "with modern improvements" by Smith. It is still giving the *Examiner* a good battle, hoping some day to defeat it. The rivalry, however, is not as fierce as it was in the days when both Hearst and de Young were young men. Then, Hearst and de Young liked to fight and call each other names. They did this until one day in late 1923. . . .

Hearst and his eldest son, George, walked into the *Chronicle's* new building on that day and sent in word by the receptionist that



they would like to see the new plant. Hearst was making a tour of his score or more of newspapers and magazines and had stopped off in San Francisco. He had come unannounced—in fact, he and de Young were still, theoretically, enemies.

De Young was hastily told in his mahogany office and at first was thrown off balance. Then telephones began ringing all over the building. Department heads rushed in to see the boss. In a few minutes plans were completed. Hearst and his son were brought in by the receptionist and introduced to a few of the sub-editors. In the editorial rooms, the picture of Hearst and his son was taken. De Young had not put in an appearance.

Then the managing editor took the Hearst party through the plant, slowing down the tour as much as possible. When the basement was finally reached, a signal was given and the presses started. Thirty papers were run off and placed before Hearst. On Page One were the story of Hearsts' visit and the picture taken previously in the editorial room on the third floor. Hearst made the proper noises.

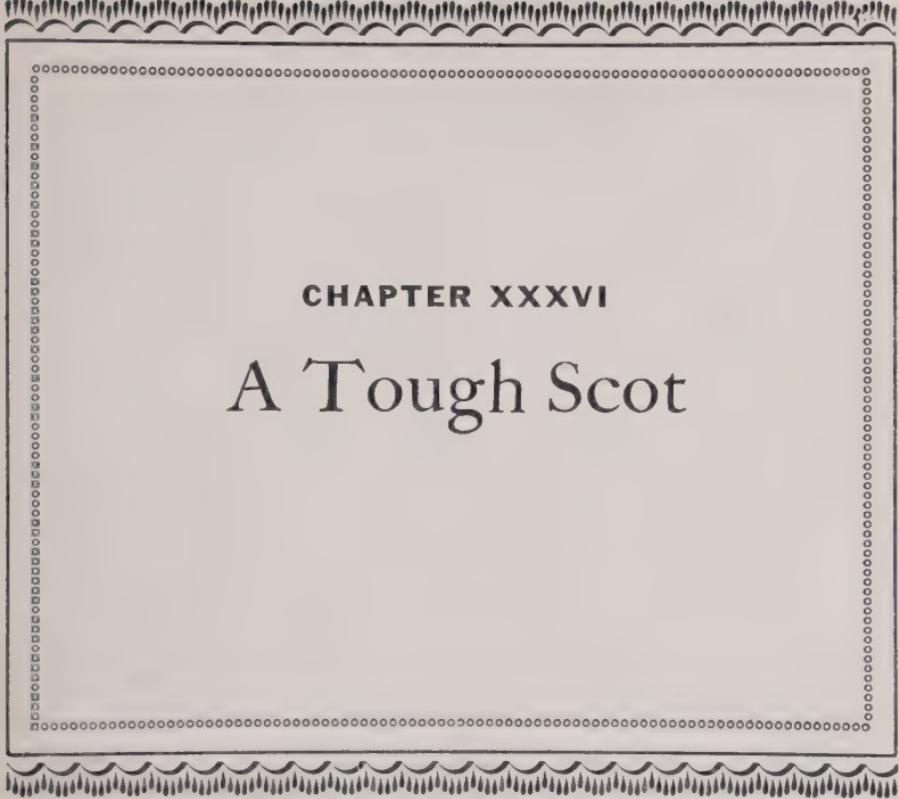
Now the guide, acting under instructions, took the Hearsts upstairs to meet the Big Boss. When Hearst Senior stepped through the narrow doorway into de Young's private office, he was carrying his hat in his hand. As he faced de Young, he placed his hat back on his head.

"I do this," he explained, "in order that I can sweep it off to you and your newspaper."

And he did, waving his hat in a curve to the floor.

This is claimed by some historians to have been their first meeting in thirty years. Now they laughed and shook hands, and for the rest of de Young's life were cordial friends.

Their editors, however, had not been informed of the new mutual respect—and in no time were in tune with the fine tradition: a-shootin' at each other as spontaneously as of old.



## CHAPTER XXXVI

# A Tough Scot

ONE of the salty San Francisco editorial men who took turns with himself in hating and loving Hearst was the clever Arthur McEwen, who, when estranged from the Chief, showed how an expert could bring forth a philippic. McEwen first joined the immortals when he wrote in Dizzy Dalziel's *Mail* the hoax of the Cliff House suicide. In the years that followed the death of the *Mail*, he had become two things; Fremont Older's teacher and severest critic, and the city's cleverest journalist. This is Older's evaluation.

In the early days, Older and McEwen wandered about the city, often penniless, uncertain, careless. They sauntered mostly at night and from the Scot Older learned much of the compassion he was to show to the discouraged minority in later years. Evelyn Wells, ace newspaperwoman, who wrote a fine book about Older, said that once they were walking on the Embarcadero when they met a dirty,

disagreeable drunk, who asked for a dime. McEwen tossed him a half dollar, and Older, suddenly remembering his Yankee poverty, protested: "He is not worthy, Arthur!"

Replied McEwen: "To be poor and worthy, Fremont, is bad enough, but to be poor and unworthy, that's Hell!"

Older remembered that. Half a century later, said Miss Wells, he would wave aside charity solicitors with the comment, "I'll let you handle the deserving cases. My hands are busy with the undeserving."

McEwen became chief editorial writer for Hearst, but he was constantly angry at the Chief. Twice he quit him and started a weekly called *The Letter* just to lambaste his ex-boss. He took in the other San Francisco editors for good measure. *The Letter* was so brilliant that McEwen's spleen surged into the realm of literary eminence.

*The Letter* batted its hard skull against the granite wall of the Hearst hierarchy and neither dented much. Nor did it hurt greatly. Older, proud of his deep affection for the wayward McEwen, valued the genius of his patron as does an apprentice sorcerer. He said it was "guilty worship of the venial sins of the pen." Older, in these early, independent days, did not believe too greatly in Hearst. And when McEwen, his *Letter* having failed, returned to Hearst with some candid show of gratitude, Older was outraged. He said sternly to McEwen:

"So! Back to prostitution!"

McEwen was pained.

"Please, Fremont," he said, "not so bluntly. Let's say instead—a few gentlemen friends."

McEwen, who died, most untimely, on May 1, 1907, when only fifty-six, was born in Scotland. When fifteen years old he came alone to California and became a laborer on the Central Pacific at \$1 a day and board. Yet from this pittance he saved enough to enter the University of California. During college vacations, young McEwen made extra money for the next semester by lecturing throughout the state on "Hard and Easy Shoveling." He used the name of Professor Sonofhew. "Hugh" was the patronym of his father's Highland clan.

Even with this hardy thrift, the money ran out and McEwen left the university at the end of his second year. Now, only eighteen, he

married Elizabeth Michelson. Her sister Miriam was the author of *The Bishop's Carriage*, a charming best-seller of the day, her brother Charles was managing editor of the *Examiner* and her brother Albert was a noted Professor of Physics at Chicago University.

At this point in his career, he grew a beard and on the elegance of it and his plausibility, got a job writing editorials for the de Youngs. Charles de Young told him he thought it best he not disclose his age because his editorials would be measured by it. At the time that he was putting in a full day with the de Youngs, McEwen was editing an Oakland weekly on the side. Later he became one of the multiple managing editors of the *Post* before entering the Hearst service. By the time he fell out with Hearst and started his angry weekly newspaper in February, 1894, McEwen was forty-three years old and at the height of his ability and literary agility. In Vol. I, No. I of his *Letter* he wrote:

"I have sufficient money to publish the *Letter* long enough to learn whether it will pay or not. It costs so little that a sale of 1,000 copies will more than support it. Having no building, presses or staff, I am without those sappers of courage, 'business interests.' I have no wealth to be robbed of. How, then, am I to be lassoed? I do not look for the approval of Nob Hill or the patronage of Tar Flat. . . . I am at nothing more wonderful, more daring than to speak out truthfully once a week about the matters that are of passing or permanent interest to intelligent people."

"No publication in San Francisco does this, because when the press is not corrupt it is cowardly, and when both or neither it is too stupid to know the worth of candor. . . . What proportion of our public men are better than prostitutes? Most of the town's successful citizens are mere rascals."

By Number II he was naming the "rascals."

"It cost Senator Fair \$350,000 to get to the Senate and I have never yet heard a soul utter a word in his praise. He is grasping, mean, malignant and takes his pleasures in two ways only—gratifying his vice of accumulation, and tormenting his financial equals by outwitting them. The common estimate of Fair is not printable."

About Collis P. Huntington: "It is his practice now to come out and give an owner's careful inspection to California, his plantation.

He is a cheerful, frank old pirate who reproves his subjects like a patriarch."

He furthered his evidence by a story about Huntington who was staying at the Palace Hotel. When the millionaire got his bill he carefully checked it and found he had been overcharged two-bits. He demanded the twenty-five cents and the clerk handed it over, saying,

"Oh, well, you know it is nothing to you, Mr. Huntington."

"Young man," said Huntington, with a note of asperity and some scorn as he pocketed the two-bits, "you'll never be able to track me through life by the quarters I have dropped."

Franklin K. Lane, later to be Secretary of State, was a great friend of McEwen and it was claimed in the *Examiner* years afterwards that he had been the real publisher of *The Letter*. McEwen mentioned him in the early days of the weekly, printing friendly testimonials from him. Lane was a newspaperman in San Francisco for many years, but at the time of *The Letter* he was editor of the *Tacoma News*.

Every newspaper in San Francisco jumped with big boots on McEwen. His arrows had pierced some thick hides.

"I have been accused," he wrote in reply to one editor, "of being a boozy journalist who beat his wife and forgot to pay his debts."

(It was Fremont Older who years later referred to this and smiled and said, "No, Arthur never beat his wife.")

McEwen was able, however, to speak for himself. He wrote: "Sure, I drank too much. I have even taken the Keeley Cure, and I am endlessly glad that I did."

At the end of three months of some of the most brilliant writing ever to be turned out by a journalist of San Francisco, McEwen suddenly announced:

"*The Letter* is a mistake. I shall stop its publication with the present number. . . . At the end of three months' publication, I have my reward in a subscription list of 160 names and an array of two advertisements. At one time I had as many as three. Beginning with 15,000, the circulation had gone down steadily since the fourth number, until the total circulation in town and country last week fell below 3,000. (He differentiated between circulation and sub-

scriptions, the former being street and counter sales, the latter mail deliveries.)

"For one thing, this shows how much better newspaper publishers understand their business and their public than their critics do. It seemed to me I was competent to speak for the silenced minority, and I set about doing it, modestly. There were capable efforts to stop the sales: the Southern Pacific, the Palace Hotel refused to sell at their counters, newsboys were threatened.

"All these efforts for the suppression might have been spared since the public has shown great willingness to perform the work far more effectually."

He suspended, having placed into English usage a number of phrases that are now clichés: "the predatory rich," "the associated villainies," "intellectual stew."

His friends excused his failure by saying he was "highly organized and very sensitive and under pressure of excitement would work himself into a state of nervous depression, during which he lost all inhibitions and agreed too readily with himself that he was a definite failure."

If that were so, like many depressives he got over it, for on October 6th, that same year, he was at it again. *The Letter* had the same format and the same brilliant bitterness. It developed then that when he suspended before he had gone right back to Hearst's employ:

"Since *The Letter* ended I have been editorial manager of the *Examiner*. Now Mr. Hearst, the owner of the *Examiner*, has telegraphed me his desire for a change of editorial policy; therefore, I resigned rather than have any share in modifying the *Examiner's* course. Hence, the reappearance of *The Letter*."

He says he hoped eventually to have a regular newspaper with *The Letter* as only one page of it. He did add a few columns, all of them of a political nature. There were also the signatures of Miriam Michelson, Jeremiah Lynch (later a noted figure in law and politics of the city) and Franklin K. Lane.

After an edition or two he wrote that he felt he should explain more fully his break with Hearst, since it was being reported about town he had been fired.

Hearst, he explained, had wired him: "I would prefer somewhat

fewer editorials. Be careful not to be drawn into too many fights. We are now after the Democrats and the Republicans, the lawyers and the businessmen, with occasional sideswipes at the people. This sort of limits our sympathizers and will also make the editorial page too truculent to be interesting. I think a more calm and judicial tone on politics and a greater variety of subjects would improve the page. Think it over."

McEwen thought it over briefly and then wired the Chief:

"The public judgment is that the editorial columns of the *Examiner* now have what they very much needed—brains, courage and character. I have given all my energies and sixteen hours a day to your paper and placed it on a higher level than it ever held before. You don't deserve such work, for you are unable to appreciate it. Your telegram is equally ungrateful and stupid. Accept my resignation."

That telegram was Arthur McEwen at his worst. It was his Scot's temper, unreasoning, egotistic, a little self-pitying. It is certainly in Hearst's favor that even he could forgive this language and for a second time take McEwen back into the fold—without comment.

For McEwen during the remaining days of his second *Letter* continued to strike out at his former boss: "Since he has called me a demagogue, I am privileged, I take it, to say that he is a humbug in journalism. He is but a clever amateur."

The charge that Hearst was ever an amateur in anything is evidence enough that McEwen sometimes permitted his temper to offset his intelligence. But when he battled Bierce, he was on level ground. He waited for a volume of Bierce's stories to appear and opened up:

"It was not in him. He who had been for half a lifetime knocking over sparrows with an elephant rifle, when admitted to the elephant country appeared there with no better weapon than a paragraphic popgun. . . . If taken into a rose garden he would at once cry out that there was manure about the roots of the bushes. . . ."

Charles M. Shortridge, who had come up from the small town of San Jose to purchase the *Call*, was termed by McEwen "an ebullient rustic."



"By sprinkling himself and his paper with hay, Mr. Shortridge is making an extraordinary success. He pursues his policy of running his paper as if life were a corn-husking, San Francisco a barn and himself the life of the party. He is determined to be happy, that all California will join him in the Virginia Reel, and that the joyous whackings of his cowhides on the floor shall be heard above all other sounds.

"It is to be feared that Mr. Shortridge is a very artful rustic. He cares nothing, this honest countryman, for the artificial glitter of literary polish, but when you have read the *Call* you find yourself informed of what the world has been doing the previous day, and his local reporters have scored several scoops."

Poor Arthur McEwen with his keen pen and his clever style and his uncontrolled resentment! He found he could not work a newspaper without oil from advertisers to keep the bearings from burning out. When the issue of June 15, 1895, appeared, it carried:

"I have given it an honest trial, but an experience of more than eight months convinces me that a satisfactory support is not to be obtained without the making of sacrifices which I am not tempted to try to make. Circulation has improved, but advertising is not to be had; at least not without altering the policy of the paper. . . . I know I have ticketed for their lifetime many rascals. . . . There is no humiliation in its stoppage. . . . I again retain the original capital, my pen."

And when Hearst heard the paper of his old friend and occasional enemy had failed again, he sent for him to come back home. This time, McEwen went to Hearst's *New York American*. He stayed for some time, lending his "original" capital to the Chief on the editorial page. He was very good at hitting at civic grafters, and when the *Bulletin* was taking up the great battle against Schmitz and Ruef in San Francisco in 1906 he came back to help Older. He threw poisonous ink for a time but the two got elected again and so McEwen quit in disgust and went back again with Hearst in New York. He was on a vacation in Bermuda in May of 1907 when his heart gave out. The man who had fought them all and been threatened with violence countless times, died quietly in his bed—still in Hearst's service.

Older wrote the obituary and said:

"He was probably the most brilliant conversationalist of his day. His intimates were few but lifelong. McEwen was anything but the wild slinger of abuse and vituperation which some of those he hit hardest represent him to have been. He was in reality the most conservative and the most charitable of men, but his conservatism was on the side of the downtrodden and his charity began with the poor."

## CHAPTER XXXVII

# A Basketful of Twenty-Dollar Gold Coins

LORING PICKERING, co-owner of the *Call* and *Bulletin*, died from overwork three days after Christmas in 1892. The bulk of the estate, said by obituary writers "to be in the millions," went to the widow and a son who had been born four years previously when Pickering was seventy-six years old. Simonton, the silent second partner, had been dead ten years, and his heirs had long set up a tenacious lament about piddling dividends. Soon George Fitch, the surviving owner, and the heirs declared war.

Mrs. Pickering had given power of attorney to her brother, R. A. Crothers, who had been for a number of years business manager of the *Bulletin*. With a similar proxy from the Simonton heirs, Crothers, a lawyer, had control. He began making changes in the staffs, hiring and firing, changing policy, generally making himself a pest.

Fitch boiled. He took advantage of a complicated contract with Pickering and petitioned for auctions.

On January 2, 1895, the auction of the *Call*, which owned all presses, stereotyping equipment, premises of both papers, was held. The courtroom was crowded. Newspaper brokers from Chicago and New York were there, but they had come to the Wild West to buy a rag for a farthing. Charles M. Shortridge, owner of the San Jose *Mercury-Times*, originally its office boy, was also there. He had long ago given up sweeping the shop and now as he sat down before the Master in Chancery's mahogany table he placed on it his silk tile hat and silk gloves. When he snapped out his first bid at \$100,000, the Eastern brokers folded their check books and sat back to watch the entertainment. The only other person willing to buck Shortridge was Crothers. Fitch, whose heart was set on his beloved *Bulletin*, did not bid.

Crothers played them close to the vest. He cleared his throat solemnly and raised \$500. There followed a long silence. Flanking Shortridge was his lawyer brother, Samuel, later to be United States Senator, and Delmas M. Delmas, his personal counsel. Sitting beside Crothers were two of the city's best-known attorneys, the noted Garret McEnerney of the leonine head, and former Police Judge A. B. Treadwell, known to the newspapermen as "Rain-in-the-Face" because of traces of childhood smallpox.

Shortridge's brother let the silence penetrate for a time and then threw in an "up" of \$500. Crothers raised \$500—and so it went until lunchtime was declared. When the recess was taken, fifty-seven bids had been made. The price stood at \$219,500. The afternoon session dragged on with the usual \$500 raises, each side awaiting the other's top bid. Then about three o'clock the courtroom doors were thrown open violently and five men marched in with baskets. These were placed on the table. The Shortridges and Delmas carelessly inspected them, thanked the delivery men and then lifted the lids. They began with remarkable nonchalance to pile the contents on the table.

The baskets gave forth twenty-dollar gold pieces—1,250 of them!

"This \$25,000 in gold," murmured Delmas M. Delmas, as if giving explanation quite unnecessarily, "is our deposit. If more is needed . . ."

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Commissioner Heacock said he thought \$25,000 gold would be sufficient deposit, if Shortridge were the successful bidder. Crothers stuttered out another \$500 raise. Shortridge frowned and stood up and shrugged his shoulders with irritation.

"I bid now," he said firmly, "an additional \$4,500!"

Crothers and his two lawyers looked at the piles of money, conferred, arose, straightened their cravats most deliberately, bowed to the Master of Chancery—and walked out.

Shortridge had bought the *Call* for \$360,000, and his name as "editor and proprietor" soon went on the masthead. Yet he did not have anything like \$360,000, and it was not long before word was around that multi-millionaire Claus Spreckels was the man behind the scene. By 1898 Shortridge's name was gone from the editorial page, and that of John D. Spreckels, son of the sugar magnate, appeared as owner.

There is considerable mystery, publicly unsolved, about how, in 1913, the Spreckels family finally dusted the *Call* off its hands. John P. Young made a strange statement in his precise San Francisco history:

"The *Call* was in possession of John D. Spreckels until September 1, 1913, when it was purchased by M. H. de Young, and its publication permanently suspended. The extinction of the *Call* created a national journalistic sensation, and was hailed with expressions of satisfaction by advertisers, who regarded the conversion of San Francisco into a two-morning-daily city as tending greatly to simplify their relations with the newspapers and the public generally. At the time of the acquisition of the *Call* by Mr. de Young it possessed a splendid equipment, the major part of which was absorbed into the *Chronicle* plant."

This remark by the staid and accurate managing editor of the *Chronicle* surprised many, for when Young published his book in 1915, the *Call* was very much alive. In fact, it is today. It had never suspended.

On Friday, August 15, 1913, the full front page of the *Chronicle* was taken up with a story that began:

"M. H. de Young has purchased the San Francisco *Morning Call*, the resources of which will be combined in a greater San Francisco

*Chronicle*. On September 1, the *Call*, which for fifty years had been a strong competitor of the *Chronicle*, will pass into newspaper history."

On the same day, the *Call* announced that on September 1st it "will cease publication and become a memory." On August 31st, supposed to be the last day, the *Call* issued a farewell edition. On Page Three was a huge sketch carrying the signatures of every staff member, and above it was, "'Thirty' comes over the wire for *Morning Call*."

There was a great deal of sentimental gush in this "last" edition of a newspaper that was not saying "Thirty" at all:

"Adieu pour toujours. Farewell forever is the thought as the San Francisco *Morning Call* passes out of existence and is to be laid away in the journalistic graveyard. Man is born to die and so is a great newspaper, for tempora mutantur, et nos mutamus in illis—the times are changing, and we ourselves with the times.

"Dear old *Call*, we place upon thy tomb a garland of memory's flowers with sincere regrets that the parting is at hand."

All these weepy statements—and in the same issue a very large, boldface advertisement which proclaimed that on the next day the *Call* would become San Francisco's new evening newspaper. Its price would be one cent. The advertisement was signed by John D. Spreckels and F. W. Kellogg—who a few days previously had announced that they had sold the paper!

And on September 1, 1913, the *Call* came out as usual, except in the afternoon. Its headlines, pictures and type were larger; the same staff was on hand. In a day or two, Kellogg gave the facts of ownership: he had 80 percent, Spreckels, 20.

No greater hokum has been peddled in the history of San Francisco's curious newspaper management. William Randolph Hearst had purchased the *Call*, using Kellogg as an agent. Kellogg had been a newspaper butcher in Omaha, St. Paul, Minneapolis, Des Moines and Sioux City, having purchased and *sold* papers in each of those cities. In fact, within a few months, Kellogg was on his way and Hearst admitted ownership. What M. H. de Young bought—if any money exchanged hands at all—was removal of a paper out of his morning field.

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The auction of the *Bulletin* on January 9, 1895, was a quiet and unhappy affair. Fitch was there, hopeful. Shortridge was there, ready to buy if the price was low enough. Crothers was there, with blood in his eye.

Thomas Magee, real-estate man, acting for Fitch, offered the first bid of \$30,000. Silence met the offer. No one moved. Crothers, sitting across the table from Fitch, lifted his hands from his lap to the top of the table and began twiddling his thumbs. Suddenly Shortridge shattered the quiet with "I bid \$35,000." Crothers at once said, softly, "\$35,500." At this Shortridge arose, slowly gathered his silk hat and gloves and walked out. He said nothing at all, not even, "Good day, Gentlemen."

Fitch's agent did not make a second bid. Apparently his first was his highest. The Master of Chancery gave his three calls and banged down the hammer. The *Bulletin* now belonged to Crothers, Mrs. Pickering and the Simonton heirs.

Fitch was out of the newspaper business that he had graced for many years. No longer would he sit in that "gloomy newspaper office where neither comfort nor appearances were considered." Ella Sterling Cummings, a former reporter for the *Deacon*, described it well in her "The Story of the Files":

"He worked in a room without windows. There was only a skylight with rain dripping through and making a wet spot on the floor, unheeded and unconsidered.

"There sat a clerical gentleman, neat and prim, not a hair out of place, not a buttonhole unmated to its button, his Prince Albert coat severely neat and irreproachable. His manner was pleasant but reservedly cautious. Conservatism sat enthroned in this little room. I felt in the presence of power which masked itself behind republican simplicity and cunning. He represented resistance and weight and conservatism—elements as necessary to the carrying on of the world as progress and light, but more complex and mysterious."

Now, in 1895, with bitterness and disappointment, the welded team of Pickering and the "reservedly cautious" Fitch had been broken apart forever. Fitch went to his country home in San Rafael with his one-third of the sale price of the two papers and lived there quietly until his death in 1907. Crothers found he did not have much in his *Bulletin*. But he was smart: he hired Fremont Older.

## CHAPTER XXXVIII

# Where Was the Bass Drum?

ELDERLY Ed Hughes, baseball editor emeritus, sole owner by squatters' rights of a big soft chair before the eternal fire in the San Francisco Press Club, announced his creed when, many years ago, he planted himself in that seat:

"The secret of living long," he said, "is to get an incurable disease and take good care of it."

He has also repeated often that even the greatest of kings is at last put to bed with a shovel. So it can be guessed that Ed Hughes has few illusions. Yet when the Late Watch, pioneer newsmen's society, gathers to talk about editors that were, Hughes and the great sports editor Harry B. Smith and all the other relaxed gang members will be calm until Fremont Older is declared open for debate. For when Older is mentioned the newspapermen of San Francisco lift their voices. To his own staff he was the most beloved editor who ever

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accepted a punch on the jaw in exchange for warranted libel; to men of small civic decency he was an ordeal; to the trade he was a legend before he became history. Hundreds sincerely hated him, thousands honestly loved him.

The tall, raw-boned, fighting editor with the walrus mustache was a great contradiction. He did not always understand himself:

"We are just a lot of god-damned ants going nowhere. . . . We all do pretty much what we must do. I am convinced that at birth we start life with a pattern or a mold, as the result of our chemical mixture, which we are compelled to follow. If there is any margin of free will at all, it is very slight. Holding this belief, regrets would not only be futile, but foolish."

The man who so constantly contradicted himself did find spiritual peace. He was a determined youth who could make a bold stroke. He became a tender man who could change his mind about the ants and announce at last, when he was seventy-eight:

"We are all just men going home."

It is a tradition of San Francisco that at no time in its history has it been without at least one eminently pugnacious journalist. If that is so, then the inconsistent Fremont Older held that spot for more than forty years. In that time, from 1895 when he became managing editor of the *Bulletin* until his death in 1935, he had "lived many lives, forgiven many things."

A farm boy, born in a Wisconsin log cabin in 1857, Fremont Older, at twelve, went to work as a printer. He had read, a few days before this, about Horace Greeley, and at once had decided to be a great editor. Formal schooling then ended for all time.

The path had many curves. Jobs were hard to get and harder to hold. Young Older became a tramp printer, who landed eventually, as most of them did, in San Francisco. There he was broke much of the time. In the spring of 1873 he got a temporary job on the *Call*, but gave it up, readily, to go with Mark Twain's old friend, Joseph Goodman, on the Virginia City *Enterprise*. Here, too, he learned about gambling from gamblers. He lost his entire week's wages (about \$40) and became so angry at himself for being a sucker that he hiked out of town for Reno—with a fifty-cent piece in his shoe, the savings of three months of work.

He made Reno and became, at seventeen, foreman of a newspaper print shop. Later, with a few dollars saved, he went back to San Francisco, where he arrived in time to become foreman for that fabulous character Davison Dalziel, then starting the legendary *Mail*. It was Older who added some of the wine to the punch that poisoned the *Mail*.

During one of the poverty spells, he was walking the streets without a place to sleep when another busted printer, sauntering with him, suggested a park bench. Said Older:

"This I flatly decline to do. Men who sit on park benches have surrendered. I'll sit on the edge of the sidewalk, or I'll walk until I drop, but I will not sleep on a park bench."

The other fellow didn't get his point and went away to his bench.

"I sat on a pile of lumber on the waterfront," added Older, "and watched the sun rise."

If you were a boss printer in those days you went to the print shop of Charles A. Murdock on Clay Street. Standing on the sidewalk would be all the printers out of work.

"One morning," said Older, "I started, as usual, for the 'hangout,' hoping to be picked up and given a few days' work. For some unknown reason, I varied my regular course. Instead of walking my routine path, I, without thinking, turned the wrong corner. I have always felt that the entire course of my life was changed by that turn into the wrong street without any reason or object known to me. I had never done it before."

Before Older corrected his mistake, a well-dressed man standing on the corner, asked him where the printers gathered.

"Right where we stand," said Older.

The man was R. G. Rowley, an attorney of Redwood City, down the peninsula from San Francisco. He was about to start a weekly newspaper and was seeking a printer who could do everything, including operate a cylinder press—for \$12 a week. Older took the job.

It was the turning point in his life. He was never again out of work. The Redwood City *Journal* started in November of 1879. Rowley couldn't write. Older found himself, hoping to keep the

paper and his job going, rewriting Rowley's blasts against the political ring of the town. Rowley had started the paper, Older claimed, in the hope that the ring would consider his nuisance value at a few hundred dollars.

Just as the creditors were backing up a van, a stranger named Joseph Ward came to Older and suggested the two of them buy the *Journal*. Rowley agreed, with optimistic buoyancy, to sacrifice the paper for \$600, nothing down, payments to start in six months.

The next day, the Redwood City *Journal* came out with "Ward and Older, editors and publishers" printed on the masthead. A few days later, Ward came to the rooms of Older late at night and woke him up. He said he had just seen the political bosses and had promised to close the paper for the next six months. This would cost them nothing, since they did not have to pay Rowley for six months—and, more to the point, the bosses would give Older and Ward \$1,000 each.

Older became in an instant the indignant crusader he was to be for the rest of his life. He rushed upon Ward, grabbed him by the waist, dragged him to the stairway and threw him down to the street. Ward kept on running—out of town.

Older gave the paper back to Rowley, who promptly sold it to the bosses himself.

The new owners made Older business manager. The editor they employed was not around most of the time and soon the bosses made Older editor also—now at \$125 a month. He had arrived. He became correspondent for the *Alta* and showed such energy that the newspaper brought him to San Francisco. So Older was a reporter in San Francisco. It was there he met Johnny Pratt, city editor, and learned a lot.

Pratt was a tiny Britisher who had learned his trade (as printer) in the shop that had done Dickens' work. He was just five feet tall and weighed less than 100 pounds. He wore heavy-rimmed glasses with huge lenses. He was one of the great city editors of the day. He had on his staff, Older soon learned, one of those stupid young men who so often come in through the front office. Pratt had been trying for a long time to find something for him to do. Older sug-

gested he be assigned for three weeks to the Salvation Army and thus he would at least be out of sight and mind for some time. Pratt agreed.

But the three weeks had to end and one day the stupid young man was there scribbling away trying to get a few columns out of his experiences with the "Army." Pratt looked at the story and was dumfounded that anyone could be so dull.

"So," he said to the young man, "you were with the Salvation Army three weeks. Did you go to the street meetings and return with the Army at night and sleep at the barracks with the soldiers?"

The reporter said he had.

"Well, then," said Pratt, "when they came into the barracks, where did they hang the bass drum?"

The reporter did not know—and Pratt fired him at once.

Older never forgot that question: "Where did they hang the bass drum?" He told young reporters that story for the rest of his life. He said it was the most revealing thing about writing he had ever heard.

Older did the usual routine of newspapermen. He jumped from one paper to another, then began to reach above the enlisted men for a commission. He was city editor of the *Call* when the auctioneer's hammer fell and Crothers made him managing editor of the *Bulletin*. He was there when earthquake and fire almost cost San Francisco its life on April 18, 1906.

## CHAPTER XXXIX

# Fire, Earthquake and Ruef

WHEN Mother Nature took San Francisco in her teeth and shook it hard and handed over the pieces to Demon Fire, it was something of a surprise. The night before had been a pleasant one. The opera season was on, and that, to San Francisco, has always been a great and happy event with the elite in smart evening dress and the crowds gaping at the theater entrance. The opera on the night of April 17, 1906, was *Carmen*, and the leads were Caruso and Fremstad. The Opera House was jammed. It held 2,500. For the rest of the 400,000 population, this Tuesday night was just a usual evening in which the stars shone as on any other spring night that held no dire portent.

At 5:12 o'clock the next morning, the great roar was heard and the world under the city rocked and spilled the people from their beds and the walls fell and buildings shed their exteriors and stood

there as skeletons. Within a few minutes sixteen major fires broke out. Three hundred and fifty-two persons died, and when on the late night of the third day the fire was halted, 490 city blocks, on which had stood 28,188 buildings, were gone. The loss was something like \$500,000,000. It was a great newspaper story—but the newspaper plants were gone, too.

From the presses of the Oakland *Tribune*, across the bay, came a combined newspaper: *The Call-Examiner-Chronicle*, now a collectors' item. The April 18th morning papers had been printed and distributed, and this small tabloid, four pages of seven columns, appeared on the second day, and so the San Francisco morning newspapers maintained a perfect record of not missing a day of publication. By the third day they were publishing from Oakland, the *Chronicle* from the *Herald*, the *Examiner* from the *Tribune*, the *Call* from the *Enquirer*.

With this courage, the city's newspapers met the greatest catastrophe ever to strike a modern city of the United States. All newspaper plants had gone down in the ruins. The *Chronicle* had the only steel-framed building, but several tons of zinc engravings, stored near the roof, had gone through to the basement, carrying with them twenty tangled-up linotypes. In offices outside the burning area and later across the bay, city editors gathered crews and sent them out to do the best they could. On noon of the second day the *Chronicle* building was surrounded by flames but not yet afire, and Managing Editor Young and Proprietor M. H. de Young went in to inspect it. They found a janitor in the editorial rooms, carefully going about the Herculean task of cleaning up. In a few hours, that building was a burned-out skeleton too. In the late morning of the first day, the regulars came in from the Presidio and took over. Mayor Eugene E. Schmitz, his \$5,000,000 City Hall a pile of rubble, formed a Committee of Fifty to aid in recovery while the fire was still at its height. Two meetings of the committee were broken up hastily because the flames had caught the buildings in which they were being held.

Meanwhile, all wires were down and the press associations could not get information to the appalled outside world. The ferries continued to run across the bay to Oakland, carrying thousands of ref-

ugees and their parrots, dogs, cats and other valuable belongings. The wires were down in Oakland, too, and so the Eastern papers picked up from nowhere, and published, some strange rumors. A tidal wave had engulfed San Francisco and it was no longer there. The city's streets had cracked open and great flames had come through and cremated everything and everyone within miles. San Francisco had slid into the ocean. In far away New York City, Will Irwin, unable to get wire information from the burning city, sat down and wrote the newspaper classic, "The City That Was."

Irwin, who had started his newspaper career, with countless others, in San Francisco had just resigned from the old New York *Sun* to take a job with *McClure's Magazine*. Now he was called back and asked by the *Sun's* editors to compile a "running story" each day, using what meager bits of information coming from cities near San Francisco, his knowledge of the city—and his imagination. So, Irwin covered the story of the city's disaster from 3,000 miles away.

"I turned out," he wrote in the San Francisco Press Club's *Scoop* in 1944, "from eight to fifteen columns a day for eight days—all of it in longhand. The part of one afternoon's product was 'The City That Was.' I was sleeping about two hours a night. By the third day I was a wreck. Then something mysterious happened. I was not tired at all. I felt I could go on forever. I grudged even those two hours of sleep. With this came an intensification of memory, to the nth power. And when the eight days had run their course, I never felt the slightest reaction of fatigue. That night, in fact, I went to a stag party and sang until the small hours."

Only one paper—*The News*—had published in San Francisco on the first day of the catastrophe, it was finally disclosed. Just three years before—March 21, 1903—*The News* had started in a tiny, unpainted shack at 408 Fourth Street (on the wrong side of Market Street) with a give-away circulation of 150. Edward Wyllis Scripps had loaned the few hundred dollars needed to start it to William D. Wasson and Hamilton B. Clark. Wasson was editor at \$10 a week. Clark, who had been Scripps' private secretary for many years, was business manager without salary because he owned stock.

They had a dilapidated press, discarded by a Chinatown news-

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paper, which they moved into a deserted store. The entire building was twenty-five by forty feet.

"The backyard was the mailing room," said Wasson. "We distributed *The News* ourselves on doorsteps with a note inviting the tenant to pay at the end of the week if satisfied. We started in a time of unrest, comparatively low wages and of political bossism. I was treasurer, foreman, city editor. Ham was everything else. There were two reporters, Floyd McKenney and Herbert Thompson. Scripps was such a stickler for economy that he decreed all employees must pay for their own copies."

In the first issue it hammered away for municipal ownership of the car lines (not won until 1945), woman suffrage and other reforms then considered radical. The paper, soon taken into the syndicate now known as the Scripps-Howard Newspapers, carried a line across the top of its Page One for many years to the effect that it did not cross Market Street. That meant it made a play of being middle-class and labor-minded. Since the late twenties it has battled across "the slot."

*The News* got out two issues on the morning of the earthquake; then soldiers came along and blasted the building. Wasson and Clark had time to bury their one linotype, and by May 5th were printing again in a sideshow tent. Between the dynamiting and the new start, *The News* printed in a loft of an Oakland livery stable.

When the city began to seek normality and newspapers were again publishing in their own shacks, much was sung about the great warmth of civic unity and love that was oozing out all over. Mayor Schmitz and his Committee of Fifty were singing in harmony. It was all for one and one for all. There was a great blanket of respectability spread over the reconstructed city—under which, however, snuggled Mayor Schmitz, his political boss Abraham Ruef and a political gang that Ruef himself had dubbed the "paint-eaters." He called them that because, he said, they were so greedy they would finally eat the paint off the City Hall. This was considered an excellent wisecrack at the time, and excellent ammunition for the anti-administration papers later.

Schmitz, a theater orchestra leader with pompadour hair, had been swung into office in a general Labor Party political upswing in 1901.

Abe Ruef, honor graduate of the State University, a leader in the co-operative movement of the day, generally considered a "liberal," had been the man behind the election. He at once began to get his "benefits," which he said he shared with Schmitz. There was nothing unusual about this. City officials had been doing it in San Francisco for half a century. Now Patrick Calhoun, president of the street car company, wanted new franchises. The French restaurant owners wanted to continue their enclosed private dining booths that were served by soft-shoed, discreet waiters. The law did not permit prize fights, but managers wanted them permitted under the name of "boxing matches." All these things, and many more, were accomplished with the crossing of palms with heavy silver.

Fremont Older had been the *Bulletin's* managing editor for about five years when Schmitz got the Labor Party endorsement for mayor. The *Bulletin* had been for some years on the payroll of the Southern Pacific Railroad—\$250 a month. This was a legal practice of many papers, who "gave space for opinions in return." The question of endorsement in the election came before the *Bulletin* management. Crothers, with an eye on the railroad company payments, wanted to back Asa Wells, the Southern Pacific's friend. Older wanted Joseph S. Tobin, a capable man with a record of reform. Thomas Boyle, the paper's business manager, wanted Schmitz.

Said the *Call*: "Boyle is out for Schmitz, Older is out for Tobin, and Crothers is out for the stuff."

A few days after this, according to Older's notes, the railroad paid Crothers \$7,500 as campaign funds.

"I learned it almost instantly," wrote Older. "The report was confirmed by Crothers ordering me to support Wells."

Schmitz won and Older sent Boyle to the new Mayor with a message: "If you will be true to labor, to the people that elected you, there is nothing you can not achieve politically. But I warn you about associating with Abraham Ruef, for Ruef will lead you astray."

This was Older at his best with the crystal ball. He had known and watched Ruef rise in politics for a number of years. He knew, too, that he was a dangerous man, too clever, too hungry. That the new City Hall gang was going to bilk the city properly and cause

San Francisco many humiliating years, he knew definitely when Schmitz sent back his answer: "Ruef is my friend and we shall stand together."

Older then started out to set his trap for Ruef and Schmitz. It was many years before the jaws of it snapped, and during that time he watched and waited, and checked and re-checked, getting evidence, weighing it. This action by Older the smart Ruef knew early, for he, too, had an excellent corps of informers. Before Older could marshal his pursuit he had violence on his hands. One afternoon without warning the newsboys of the *Bulletin* struck. The first Older knew about it was when a howling mob was outside his building throwing rocks through his windows.

It was impossible to get much of the *Bulletin's* circulation on the street. Gangs cut the harness of the horses, professional thugs broke arms of loyal carriers, solicitors were beaten by the brass knuckle boys. Older went into the mob outside and was roughly handled. He got through with only torn clothes, but he had seen what he suspected: Schmitz and Ruef toughs. The next day Older got the leader of the toughs into his office by the rear door.

Said Older, who was soon to open a long battle for civic honesty: "Twenty-four hours and a thousand dollars to break the strike."

"A thousand dollars?" said the leader.

"Yes," replied Older, "tomorrow at this time, if the strike is over."

The next night the very mob that had been attacking the *Bulletin* office for three days went to Ruef's home and threatened him with violence. This was an added, unpaid-for act, thought up by the thug-captain all by himself.

"That afternoon," said Older, "our papers were on the streets as usual, and I paid the thousand dollars."

Now Older published a cartoon showing Schmitz, Ruef and a police commissioner with a number of hands pointing at them. Under the cartoon the caption: "One or more of these men are taking bribes in Chinatown."

The police commission subpoenaed Older and demanded his proof, and he calmly testified: "I haven't any, except my belief. I am not prepared to say which one of these men is taking bribes, but I am going to find out."

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Older was working smartly and secretly among the Chinese and finally had Sergeant Tom Ellis of the Chinatown Squad, who, he thought, was Ruef's payoff man, backed into a corner. One night, Ellis walked into the room where the grand jury was meeting and slapped down \$1,400 in bills on the tables and said, "I received that from Chan Cheung, paymaster of the police department in Chinatown. That's seven weeks' pay for overlooking gambling down there."

He turned and walked out. No one stopped him, no juror asked him a question. He waited outside the jury room to be called back to explain himself. Nothing happened. He went home, feeling somewhat foolish, he later said, because his brave admission had fallen amidst such pusillanimity.

The laugh was on Older. He had promised Ellis that if he confessed and took leave from the department he would be placed on the *Bulletin* payroll for \$125 a month for two years. Older had thought, of course, that the Ellis confession would involve Ruef, and now he tried to get Chinese gamblers to admit they had been giving the political boss bribes. Any pioneer San Franciscan—including Older—should have known better. The old-time Chinese just don't squeal. So now Older had a useless employee at \$125 a month.

At last Sergeant Ellis took care of his own problem. He went again before the grand jury and demanded return of the \$1,400 he had slapped down when he had attempted to tell all. Again there was a silence, while the jury's clerk dug up the money and handed it, without comment, to the policeman. Ellis went back to his beat—in Chinatown.

"The oddest part of the entire thing," commented Older, "was that the \$1,400 was still there to be handed back to Ellis."

Older never quit trying. He and Edward Bowes (later Major Bowes of radio fame) dug up an opponent for Schmitz in the 1905 election and their man took a severe beating—and the *Bulletin* windows were broken by the crowd when the returns were known. He had worked up a lot of evidence and was beginning to shoot again when the 1906 earthquake spoiled his aim. He let months go along as the city's reconstruction went on, then, seeing the same old gang with the same old practices, Older slipped away to see Teddy Roose-

velt and asked him for William J. Burns, then a government detective, and for Francis J. Heney, then a special government prosecutor in Oregon land fraud cases. The President promised to release both after they were through with the Oregon cases. Older told Roosevelt he would dig up \$100,000 for expenses.

To get this sum, Older went to Rudolph Spreckels, son of the pioneer Pacific Coast and Hawaiian sugar magnate, who had quarreled with his father when seventeen and made his own independent fortune. James Phelan, millionaire philanthropist, joined Spreckels in providing the money.

Heney came with Burns and the campaign started quietly, early in 1907. It was disclosed, eventually, that supervisors had taken bribes for prize-fight permission, that Calhoun had got his franchises, that the French café men still had the soft, enclosing velvet curtains at the booth entrances—for all of which money had changed hands.

By May of 1907, fourteen indictments came down against Calhoun, and Ruef, still arrogant, admitted under oath that he had given Schmitz \$55,000 as his share of the sum received from the street-car company for the franchise.

"The money," said Ruef, "came to us unsolicited. How can you prevent a corporation giving away money if it wishes to do so? The givers of bribes were in this instance more blamable than the men who received them."

"This," remarked Managing Editor Young in his *Chronicle*, "is a case of Satan rebuking sin."

Schmitz and Ruef were indicted, too. In fact, the grand jury finally brought in 383 indictments, 47 of them against the Mayor and 129 against the boss. Older was a happy man.

Now the newspapers went into paroxysms of front-page madness. And Fremont Older's *Bulletin* led all the rest. The trials went on and on, far into the year. There were the usual legal sparring, the contrived confusion, the weariness of droning voices in over-heated courtrooms, the monotonous, repetitious reporting of testimony, thrice told.

The intrigue outside of court became rough, with private eyes attempting to involve opposition witnesses with trollops; sides fought to bribe away each others' detectives. There were so many special

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operatives in the city that it was difficult to straighten them out in the news, and constantly newspapers were apologizing for saying the right things about the wrong person.

"Every few feet," wrote Older, "one met a man who was working for one side or the other, and many prominent men were constantly being shadowed by *both* sides. Even those shadowing were being, in turn, shadowed. It was a vicious circle, in a way."

Older was forced to take a bodyguard at the insistence of Spreckels and Phelan and Detective Burns, but he was always running out on the fellow. His friends were dropping rapidly away. When he entered the Bohemian Club, he was met with silence. A friend came to him there and said the other members believed he had taken a bribe of \$100,000 from Spreckels to swing his paper into a campaign to get Calhoun indicted. Spreckels and Calhoun were personal enemies of long standing. The \$100,000 figure undoubtedly arose from the fact that that sum had been donated partly by Spreckels to pay detectives' and others' expenses, but Older, always ready for playful irony, said:

"Oh, they don't really believe that!"

Said the friend, "Why not?"

"Because," grinned Older, "if they thought I had ever made that much money they'd give me a testimonial dinner."

Meanwhile, Older and his wife had been going each day to the beach for a swim in the surf. (Until physicians forbade it in late life, Older swam in his ranch-house pool evenings and early mornings, come winter or summer, every day without fail. The early swim was usually about 6 A.M.) In order to change clothes, they had rented an old cable car someone had hauled to the beach and put on stilts. One evening as they crossed the runway to their waiting automobile to return downtown, a friend of Older's, an underworld figure, whispered in passing, "Stay away from the beach!"

Older knew the warning was a good one, and he had two plain-clothesmen stationed at the beach—and continued his swims. Later on it was disclosed, he said, that a Mexican gunfighter had been brought from Arizona by the graft forces to shoot him. The Mexican had followed Older to the beach, discovered the plain-clothesmen and decided the pay was not enough.

Later when the home of a witness against the indicted men was dynamited in Oakland and Peter Claudianos was sent to San Quentin for it, Older and the Greek had a quiet talk. Claudianos told Older that a cabin next to the beach car-house had been rented by himself and others and fifteen pounds of dynamite stored in it. They were about to plant the explosive under the old cable car when their explosion in Oakland went bad and they landed in prison.

"That such melodrama could be played in a city as modern as San Francisco is incredible but true," Older said.

One day he was in the office of Heney when the telephone rang.

"I am Mr. Stapleton," said the voice. "Mr. Older, if you will come to the Savoy Hotel on Van Ness Avenue I will give you some very important information."

Older asked the man to come to Heney's office, but the stranger said he thought it would not be safe. The editor agreed to go to the hotel. As he left, he turned to one of the men there and said:

"This may be a trap. If I am not back in half an hour, you may be sure that it is. Tell this to Spreckels."

As Older reached Van Ness Avenue, an automobile drove alongside the curb and two men jumped out. One pulled out a piece of paper which he said was a warrant for the arrest of Older on a charge of criminal libel. The young and powerful Older went into the automobile without offering battle, an action he wondered about in later years.

"I guess I got the hypnotic treatment," he said. "Sometimes a revolver can do that to a fellow."

As the automobile sped out of the city, Older saw in another car ahead an attorney for Calhoun, and the railroad man's chief detective. Then Older knew he had been trapped. He attempted to get out of the car, only to have a pistol pressed against his side.

"I could not have been more frightened than I was then," Older said candidly, later. "I felt quite sure they were going to take me to some lonely spot on the beach and murder me. I began to summon all the philosophy I could. I felt that I was going to die very soon. My only hope was that death would be quick. I feared, however, that they might torture me to get some kind of statement from me before killing me."

“However, I took a cigar out of my pocket and lighted it. My lips were dry, my tongue parched, but I made a fairly good effort at a careless air. I said, ‘This kind of deal isn’t fair. It isn’t sporting. You are dealing the cards from under the table.’”

Just what the men intended to do with Older was never known. He said many years later that he was still convinced it was the intention of his captors to murder him.

“I have since learned,” he said, “that the only reason I am alive to tell my story is due to the lack of nerve of one of the men on the trip. He has since told me that he would have been paid \$10,000 if he killed me on the trip. A justice of the peace in Los Angeles had issued a warrant for me at instigation of the grafters, and it was planned that after I was taken into the hills somewhere near San Luis Obispo and murdered that it would be claimed I had attempted to escape and been shot as I ran.”

Whatever the intention, Older was rushed into a compartment of a Los Angeles-bound train at Redwood City. A friend who saw Older in there surrounded by strangers was much alarmed. He dropped off the train at Salinas and telephoned the *Morning Call*. The hue and cry was on for Older. At Santa Barbara, the sheriff took Older from the train. Spreckels had telephoned a superior judge there and had a writ of habeas corpus signed. Armed with this, the sheriff took Older and his captors to court. Two of the men who had “arrested” Older, were, in turn, arrested and returned to San Francisco for trial. They won acquittal without much effort. The rest of the gang disappeared and were never tried.

Ruef at last went to trial. In the midst of it, a rejected juror named Haas, calmly furious at having been revealed as an ex-convict while being examined for duty, walked up to Special Prosecutor Heney in court and shot him through the neck just below the ear. The scene in court was a wild one. Haas was arrested, and Heney, being placed in an ambulance in what was believed to be a dying condition, said, brightly, “I’ll get them yet,” as he was driven away.

The city was flooded with extras and crowds gathered again on street corners. But Haas did not answer the question the police were asking: Who urged him to shoot Heney? On the third day he was found shot to death in his cell. And, now, there was still a second

unanswered question: How did he get the old derringer found lying by his side? Was it suicide or murder?

Hiram Johnson, later to be Governor and United States Senator, who volunteered to take over where Heney fell, re-opened the trial by announcing, "I am ready for anything that it is decided is best. If it is the rope, I'm for that, too."

The case finally went to the jury and the prosecution's special Detective Burns told Hiram Johnson that, while he could not prove it, four of the panel had been bribed. The jury did not bring in a verdict as the day wore on. Rumor spread that it was to be acquittal.

Some weeks had passed since Heney had been shot and by some miracle he had recovered. Older rushed to the Lane Hospital and found Heney could be moved. So, while that jury sat sullenly in a room near the courtroom with a few wilful men attempting to bring more stubborn ones to an acquittal verdict, Older's men were telephoning members of the League of Justice, a group organized to support the prosecution. All of its members rushed to the courtroom. There, as they sat quietly, the door was swung open and Heney walked in, supported by Fremont Older.

The roar that went up and the screaming applause that broke out was heard for blocks. It lasted many minutes. The jury heard it well. Older had shown it, he said, "the temper of the people." Twenty minutes later the jury came in and returned a verdict of guilty. Ruef, the honor student, the Phi Beta Kappa, the speaker of five languages, was convicted of taking a bribe. Tirey L. Ford, street-car company attorney, had been previously acquitted of giving this bribe, but Ruef had now been convicted of taking it!

All during the graft trials, the division between Crothers and his managing editor had grown wider and wider. Before Calhoun came to trial, the next campaign for District Attorney began to warm up and Crothers ordered Older to support a man put up by friends of the accused grafters.

Older went into a blind fury.

"You own the *Bulletin*, but you don't own me!" he screamed to Crothers.

Then the two men stood in Crothers' office and hurled curses at each other. It was one of Older's most violent moments. What each

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man said that day could never be recalled—and neither ever made an effort to recall it. The hatred each bore for the other welled up now in strangling words as they stood across a desk and roared themselves hoarse.

Older would not resign. Crothers, knowing Older held his circulation together, would not fire him. In the end, Crothers ran from the building and Older rushed to the local room and got out an announcement placing the *Bulletin* behind Francis J. Heney for District Attorney.

Heney, who had been shot on the battle line, was decisively defeated by Charles M. Fickert, later the prosecutor of Tom Mooney. Fickert's first action after being sworn in was to come into court and read a document (which Older said was prepared for him by counsel for the United Railroads) requesting dismissal of the Calhoun cases and all other defendants. The order was granted. The graft prosecutions were over.

Three years had gone by. They had been hard, fighting years in which Heney had almost given his life—and now there was little to show for it. Only Ruef was in prison; all the others had escaped. Schmitz had been convicted, only to win a re-trial on a technicality from the higher court and then get an acquittal in six minutes at his second trial.

"Of all the men who had sold and bought San Francisco and the people of San Francisco," wrote Older, "we had put just one behind bars, in stripes. To this end, Heney had given three years of his life, without receiving one penny for it, paying his own living expenses from money he had saved. He had been shot through the neck and made deaf in one ear. He finished the fight almost without money, with his practice gone, and nothing but defeat at the hands of the people of San Francisco to repay him for all this."

So did San Francisco wearily sleep again, bored by the monotony of excitement.

When the steel gates of San Quentin penitentiary clanged at the back of Abe Ruef, he did not bother to look about for his pals in crime. He was alone. No one had preceded him, and no one was coming after. Whatever his thoughts, he was no sadder than Fremont Older, the man who had put him into the Big House.

After Ruef went away, Older brooded for days. He sat alone in his dirty little office with the dozens of cigar butts on the old carpet and refused to see anyone. A few days later he went across to San Quentin and visited Ruef. Then he returned and sat in his office for hours alone. When he aroused himself he scribbled what he called "a piece for the paper." It surprised the city very much, and shocked friends to whom blood had a sweeter taste.

He asked for the release of Ruef.

"I had been fighting," Older was to write later, "for a clean city, but my motives had not been all pure, civic devotion. I had not been unaware that I was making a big and conspicuous fight, that it was making me a big figure in men's eyes, and that if I won I would be something of a popular hero."

"I thought of the years I had spent, doggedly pursuing Ruef, with the one idea of putting him behind bars, and it seemed to me I had been foolish and wrong. I should not have directed my rage against one man, human like myself, but I should have directed it against the forces that made him what he was."

This attitude few could understand. Certainly Crothers thought Older a madman. Judge William P. Lawlor who tried the cases, Spreckels and Phelan who produced the fighting money, all the associates, sat back aghast when Older announced he was going to campaign to get the convicted man out of prison.

The only explanation of the associates in the graft prosecution was that Older had broken faith. Many refused to talk to him for years after his statement. Judge Lawlor made a special trip to Older's office to denounce him, and the row that broke out between the two old friends brought a number of reporters hovering about the door expecting to go into action for their boss. Older lost his temper, and his voice, often so gentle that one had difficulty in hearing him in a small room, boomed so loudly that it almost blew out the windows. Judge Lawlor was a good hand at roaring, too, and as his voice mounted, Older shouted back some startling facts.

Detective William J. Burns, he yelled, had offered a witness \$10,000 to testify and Judge Lawlor himself had been anything but fair on the bench. He threw into Lawlor's face the remarks the Judge

was supposed to have made about Ruef at the Family Club—while the case was still being heard.

"Lawlor," said Older, "left my room with foam on his lips."

Older, all alone, sneered at by the rival editors as a turncoat, negatived constantly by his own publisher, nevertheless fought the good fight. (He did finally get Ruef paroled, but not one minute before Ruef had served one half of his new sentence: four years and five months.) Hiram Johnson, the prosecutor, had become Governor in the meantime, and although he remained fond of Older he refused to permit parole. He, too, said Older was "somewhat insane." But he smiled when he said it.

Older answered, "My one-time friends must decide that I am at least eccentric in my depravity."

The prosecution cost \$213,391.50, raised mostly by private subscription.

"This is a delusive victory!" wrote the candid Older.

He had had a time for himself. He had made journalistic history, his name was known across the nation. New words he had coined were now common in journalese. W. O. McGeehan, later a brilliant sports writer in New York, had made them by quoting Older's new words in his reports. The "higher-ups," "gangster," "mutt" (a diminutive of mutton head) were claimed by McGeehan to be Olderisms. McGeehan, too, made famous a remark of Older that has since been quoted around the world. He had said of the paint-eating supervisors:

"They wouldn't pass the Lord's Prayer without money."

## CHAPTER XL

# The Preparedness Day Bomb

ON JULY 21, 1916, Fremont Older picked up a note that no one had seen anyone place on his desk. It said a "little direct action that would echo around the world" was to be used the next day during the Preparedness Day parade. Older was not too sure it was a crank note and turned it over to the police chief. On the next early afternoon, a bomb in a suitcase shattered itself against the brick wall of a saloon on Steuart Street about fifteen feet off Market, hurling its home-made shrapnel into the hundreds preparing to join in the parade already moving up the city's main street. Ten were killed and forty badly mangled.

Older, when the day had quieted down, remarked to his city editor, "I think Mooney did it. Mooney is the only 'red' rash enough to do a thing like this."

Tom Mooney had been a militant labor leader for a number of

years in California, had recently been dealing out violence in attempting to promote strikes. Not so long before he had been acquitted of unlawful possession of dynamite. Warren K. Billings, young, zealous disciple, who had already done two years in prison for carrying explosives in a suitcase, was working with Mooney in organizing the strikes. They were a natural and somewhat obvious magnet for the police. The city was wildly demanding revenge. The police arrested also Mrs. Mooney, Israel Weinberg, a taxicab driver, and Edward Nolan, president-elect of a local chapter of the Machinists' Union.

According to the prosecution, Mooney plotted the tragedy with the other defendants, and Billings, the tool, planted the bomb, being taken to the scene by Weinberg, the taxicab driver. Billings was found guilty of second-degree murder and sent up for life in September of 1916. In January and February of 1917, Mooney was tried, convicted of first-degree murder and sentenced to be hanged. Nolan was released without trial; Mrs. Mooney and Weinberg were acquitted.

All great trials have their eccentrics, and the Mooney case was not an exception. The list of witnesses included a neurotic waiter suffering from paresis; two women who had in visions seen either Mooney or Billings place the suitcase, their ethereal bodies being elsewhere at the moment; a cattle buyer who may well have been buying steers 150 miles away when he saw the suitcase placed against the building; a dozen other odd creatures, one of whom indiscreetly wrote letters telling friends to come on and testify and enjoy the good pickings.

It was one of those letters that swung Older into the Mooney campaign where he fought gallantly until his death eighteen years later. One day into the office of Older came the weatherbeaten, leathery old Andrew Furuseth, veteran leader of the seamen, much beloved. Andy and Fremont had long been friends. The old man sat down and carried on a casual conversation—and then placed on Older's desk a strange letter. It had come into the hands of union men in the East and Furuseth had picked it up. The letter had a signature purported to be that of Frank Oxman, known as the "honest cattleman" to the prosecution. He had testified he had seen

Mooney place the bomb. The letter was to Ed Nockels, an itinerant, informing him that if he cared to come to San Francisco and testify as he was told to do he could make some easy money. Older published the letter. It was one of the great newspaper sensations of the day. It started the "Mooney was framed!" campaign that became the Dreyfus case of America.

The extra that carried the Oxman letter had been issued without knowledge of Crothers and his nephew, young Loring Pickering. The latter had taken his inheritance and was now active in the management of the *Bulletin*. Pickering was already rescinding Older's orders, killing his editorials, changing his copy. He had not been long in the business. Older was sixty years old and had been a newspaperman at least forty-five years. Word came soon to Older that Crothers and Pickering had gone before a citizens' committee (formed to aid in the prosecution of Mooney) and apologized for the action of their managing editor. Then he went to his ranch down the peninsula and sat under an oak quietly and alone for a long time.

The next day he went into Crothers' office and found him talking to his nephew on the telephone. Older ordered the conversation held up. He wanted, he said, an answer to a question, and he wanted it now. After twenty-four years of service, was he or was he not to be guaranteed a lifetime job on the *Bulletin*?

Crothers asked Pickering on the other end of the telephone.

The answer was: Definitely no!

Older walked out.

Hearst two years before had offered Older the managing editorship of the *New York American* and had been turned down. Now, by that method Hearst and many other executives have used often, the "grapevine," Hearst heard about what had happened. He at once wired Older:

"Come to the *Call*. Bring the Mooney case with you."

Older, quiet with the icy calm that came to him after a rage that had burned him out, wrote a letter to Crothers on July 16, 1918. In it he said:

"Thought throughout the world is rapidly changing. Democracy may soon cease to be the comfortable, meaningless, and empty

phrase it has been in the past. It may come to have a real meaning; it may gather force and power, and rather quickly bring about a readjustment of the economic inequalities which now exist all over the world. In that event, even the advanced policies of the *Bulletin* of a few years ago, which are now forbidden by you, would be regarded as mere commonplaces by a world awakened to the realities of life and to the injustices that all through the centuries have been the lot of the common man.

"You have willed that there should be no further advocacy of, or sympathy with, the causes that had grown so dear to me. You had a legal right to make this decision, but I continued for a long time to hope that I might be able to persuade you at least to let a dim light burn in the *Bulletin* window—not to snuff it out as you have done. . . .

"The influence of your nephew is growing upon the conduct of the *Bulletin*. He now owns one-quarter interest, and will ultimately own it all. As you well know, he is hostile to me and to everything that I represent. . . . He will eventually have his way. Thus my usefulness to you is at an end. . . .

"Parting from you and the *Bulletin* after twenty-four years of intimate association is a tragedy, but I see no other course."

Older said afterwards that when Crothers read that letter he stood stunned and then crushed it in his hands. He walked about his office while others watched and he showed his bitterness in some warm words.

"How could he!" he cried. "Why, we've been like brothers!"

Suddenly he brightened a little.

"Well," he said, as he snatched up the resignation letter and carefully smoothed it out, "anyhow, I'll save ten thousand dollars a year on his salary!"

In no time Older was chortling that while Crothers had saved \$10,000 on salary, the *Bulletin's* books were showing a loss of \$125,000.

Older took with him to the *Call* many of the valuable members of the *Bulletin* staff. He also took considerable circulation.

When Older went to Hearst in 1918, he carted off, besides the Mooney case, a number of great stories that Crothers had refused

to permit him to publish. One was the Fair will case, involving a State Supreme Justice and an alleged \$100,000 bribe. Sam Leake, picturesque character in California politics and managing editor of the *Call* when John D. Spreckels had it, wrote a dramatic "confession" for Older's *Bulletin* after he had been cured of the booze habit. Leake then became a spiritual adviser and into his office one day came William J. Dingee who once had been one of California's multi-millionaires. He had had, in his day, a mansion on Fifth Avenue, New York. Now he was broke. He wanted to follow Leake's move and clean himself out with a confession. He wrote it and Leake gave it to Older, who, glancing casually through it, was electrified to read that through Dingee a Supreme Court Justice was supposed to have taken a bribe to decide the Fair will contest.

Crothers refused to permit Older to publish the confession. He said he had too much faith in the Supreme Court to believe a Justice of it would take a bribe. Older put it away in the office safe. Some months later, Eugene Schmitz, the former Mayor whom Older had helped throw out of office and almost into prison, met the editor in the street. He always greeted Older in a jovial, friendly fashion; often told others he admired Older's editorial honesty very much.

"Fremont," he said cheerily, "I hear you have a confession of Dingee in your safe. Go ahead and publish it, as far as I am concerned. (It was all mixed up with political intrigue about Schmitz.) The Justice has heard about it and has told friends that he will kill you if it is run. Yet before he does it he would like to meet you."

How the ex-Mayor knew about the confession Older never knew. He recognized a hint, however, and so the meeting with the Justice was arranged. The Judge, according to Older's biography, claimed he had been sold out without his knowledge, that someone had learned he had changed his opinion in the case before the decision was handed down and had sold the knowledge to the Fair heirs for \$100,000. Older then told him that the Dingee confession had with it ledger pages in which it was disclosed the Judge had received the money.

According to Older's notes, the Justice then said:

"I am getting on in years, Older. I haven't much longer to live. If you will promise not to run this I will resign from the bench. I also

will sever all connections with District Attorney Fickert (who had convicted Mooney) and make a personal plea on Mooney's behalf to the Governor."

"I am getting on in years, too," said Older, "and I've got to the place where I no longer want to hurt anyone. If you will do as you promise, I will not publish."

It was agreed, and a few days later the Justice resigned. Older took the confession with him to the *Call*. Later in 1918, President Wilson appointed a board headed by Labor Secretary William B. Wilson to investigate the Mooney case. Its odor had long ago reached Washington. J. B. Densmore, director general of the United States Employment Service, put a dictograph in the office of District Attorney Charles M. Fickert and took down a lot of stenographic information. One day George Parsons, who had worked with Densmore, walked into Older's office in the *Call*. He showed Older that the former Supreme Court Justice had been in conversation with Fickert, secretly still aiding in the fight to keep Mooney in prison. Older was furious. Older took the Dingee confession out of its safe and handed it to Parsons. He knew that Parsons had come for it. The confession went into the Densmore Report and into the archives of Congress—but not before Older had printed it in its entirety in the *Call*. It took nine full pages. President Wilson wired the Governor of California:

"Would it be possible to postpone the execution of sentence of Mooney until he can be tried upon one of the other indictments against him, in order to give full weight and consideration to the important changes which I understand have taken place in the evidence against him?"

"I urge this very respectfully indeed, but very earnestly, because the case has assumed international importance."

The Governor commuted Mooney's sentence to life, November 28, 1918.

Older, with Mooney's life saved, went pell mell into the battle for his pardon. He took social ostracism, he was called a Communist, an I.W.W., a criminal syndicalist, a traitor, all the foul things that could be written and spoken. Hearst backed him faithfully. He had promised Older he could bring the Mooney case with him to the

*Call*, and a promise is truly a promise to the owner of the monarchs of the dailies. Older sent reporters tracing John McDonald, eccentric waiter who confessed and repudiated perjury a half dozen times. He tried futile deals with successive governors. It was feared that a pardoned Mooney would become a martyred labor leader. Older told governors that Mooney, upon release, would be given a series of mass meetings across the country, ending in a big one in Madison Square Garden. Then he promised oblivion.

All this time, Older personally hated Tom Mooney.

"Mooney," he said to this writer [then his city editor], "doesn't like me either. Personally, neither of us is so very much, but that is not important. Mooney did not place the bomb. I am not ready to say he should not be in prison for some *other* crime. That also is not important. What *is* important is that law must be maintained or there can be no civilization. If a prosecutor is permitted to circumvent the law, as did Fickert [then District Attorney], in railroading Mooney to prison, then law fails and justice is dead. If Mooney is to be put in the penitentiary, then put him there for something he did. Let the law take its due, not a dishonest, revenge."

(Eventually, Governor Culbert Olsen, who had won election on a promise to free both Mooney and Billings, did so in January of 1939. Older, who had not lived to see victory, was right. Mooney had his mass meetings, became sick and died soon in a hospital.)

But long before this had happened, the Densmore Report and Older's constant battering against him cost Fickert his re-election. A few days before leaving his office for good, Fickert met Older under Maxfield Parrish's Pied Piper mural in the bar at the Palace Hotel. Older's drinking days were long over. He was there chatting with friends who did not have the same doctor's orders.

The former college football captain hit Older so hard he went flying backwards and landed flat on the floor. Not a word had been exchanged. There was a look of astonishment on Older's face as he fell.

The editor was hurt and was helped into a hotel room above. Word came to the *Call* office, across the alley from the hotel, that the boss had been beaten, and the editorial staff and half the printers and pressmen swarmed into the Palace looking for someone to fight.

Fickert had disappeared and police asked the newspapermen to go away. They did only after Older sent word that they were not to make asses of themselves.

Shortly before his death and when he had struck the bottom of the toboggan, Fickert came into the office of Older in the *Call* building. He sat down humbly and had words with the man he hated so and whose jaw he had almost broken. He came asking for financial help—and got it.

After Older left the *Bulletin* in July of 1918, the two owners held it by the scruff of the neck above the water until 1925, when a few wealthy men decided to enjoy newspaper ownership. They found, however, that as a plaything a newspaper is an educational toy, teaching, mostly, that unless you are a professional you will pound shovelfuls of money down a bottomless rat hole. Herbert Fleishhacker, Wallace M. Alexander, A. B. C. Dohrmann and a few others took the *Bulletin* from the willing hands of Pickering and Crothers. It was a confused deal, the financial arrangements of which still belong to the men concerned.

The paper did not change, either in spirit, content, policy or money-losing ability. Fleishhacker, a financier of considerable wisdom, failing to stay long amused by a drone, sent it, finally, along newspaper row to proffer its wares. The Scripps-Howard combine, which owned the *News*, was righteously unsociable; Hearst's *Call* fell into hopeful friendliness on sight.

While the *Call* disclosed serious intentions, the *News*, *Examiner* and *Chronicle* were titillated by the idea of getting the carcass of an old hoss off the main street. The four went into conference on this deal. Each thought the city's merchants' advertising budgets might be more happily split four ways than five. But the *Call* was educated in the most astute school of politics. The *News* was selling for two cents, the *Call* and *Bulletin* for three cents. Thus those not on reading terms with Hearst, instead of taking three cents change when buying the *News*, also took the *Bulletin*, thereby bringing the latter's circulation far above its honest value. The *Bulletin* claimed 80,000; rivals said it was less than 62,000, of which 15,000 were street sales.

The original plan was for the four papers to buy and kill the *Bulletin*. The purchase price was to come four-sixths from the pockets

of Hearst's *Call* and *Examiner* and two-sixths from the *Chronicle* and *News*.

At the last minute, however, only Charles S. Young, the *Call's* publisher, acting for William Randolph Hearst, remained interested.

**He paid \$1,250,000!**

This splendid sum was paid for a newspaper that was already plucking at the covers. Its presses were old, its furniture was sneered at by second-hand dealers. Its "morgue" was a pile of dirty old clippings and yellowed pictures that someone, on the last day, dumped in a heap on the floor.

After Hearst got a solid look into the poke he had bought, he fired Publisher Young. But he was stuck with it. He had bought nothing but a name, truly a fine historical name with lichens all over it. The *News*, that had not put a cent into the deal, got most of the *Bulletin's* circulation. Only Older got a thrill out of the purchase. He was taking back under his paternal wing the *Bulletin* he had never quit loving. He took it back as if it were a wayward child, returned ill, destitute and dirty, much in need of a father's tender care.

The *Call* took the proud name of the *Call-Bulletin*, and the old papers that Fitch and Loring Pickering had builded were together once more.

## CHAPTER XLI

# These Friends, Well Remembered

**I**N HIS time, Fremont Older saw many sunrises. And sunsets. Many men and women he loved walked slowly toward the horizon and dropped away from sight. In between he remembered much: the wise man, the fool, the ungracious, the grateful, the craven, the brave.

Clarence Darrow was a special friend. They had met first when the lawyer was defending the men who dynamited the *Los Angeles Times*. Over their cigars (Older was then smoking twenty a day), they often took the human race apart, coming to the conclusion that it did not amount to much. As they parted after an all-night session about the worthless animal called Man, they agreed on one point and shook hands:

"They follow like sheep and turn like wolves."

After Older had been seriously ill, Darrow wrote: "I am sorry

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you lived through it, Fremont. Not that I wouldn't miss you, but as a friend I love, I want death to be behind you."

Perhaps the warmth between them came from a mutual battle for what they considered the underdog. One of their special subjects was Frank M. Pixley, pioneer editor of the *Argonaut*, a liberal lawyer who became Attorney General of California. It was Pixley they were quoting when they said:

"I like to be in a minority party in politics. I like the desperate side of a law suit. I like to run for inevitable defeat in office. Anybody can swim downstream with the apples. The sensation of being applauded is the more agreeable if you have just recently been hissed. To a mule, oats and hay are better than fame. A public man is like a liberty pole. It is a fine thing to float the national standard from its peak, but it is uncomfortable to find every dog lifting his leg on you."

It was this spirit that caused Older to become the friend of every ex-convict. Much of his sympathy there was desperately misplaced. After twenty years of dealing with these fellows, giving them sanctuary at his ranch, clothing, food, money, he said:

"I'm sorry, but I must admit that of the scores I have helped, all but one or two have failed me."

That was a difficult statement for Older to make, but Donald Lowrie had failed him after being made into a nationally noted writer by Older. *My Life in Prison* had made Lowrie—and raised the *Bulletin's* circulation by 41,000. Lowrie became the man of the hour all over the West. He got married and had a child, he spoke before clubs, he wrote serials, he advanced prison reform by many years—then he disappeared.

A few sad months later came a second serial, *Back in Prison—Why?* That was also by Lowrie, now in the Arizona State Penitentiary. Booze had put maggots in his brain, too. He was dying of tuberculosis. Evelyn Wells, now a New York writer, was Older's ace woman reporter at the time. He rushed her to the prison to get final notes and to finish the serial in case death beat Lowrie to the last chapter.

Miss Wells, young and pretty, was the only woman allowed inside with the cons. For weeks she worked in the TB ward where

Lowrie lay gasping out his final words. There, surrounding him in different stages of coming death, were seventeen men. Miss Wells became, naturally, the light of their lives. One day they told her they were going to give her a tea. It would be the first ever given inside the penitentiary—and Evelyn was to be the honored guest.

Miss Wells has never been able to write this story.

The seventeen collected their few dimes and nickels and gave them to a "free" man connected with the front office. He was to go into Florence on one of his trips and get:

One chicken, the makings of a salad, a store cake, a quarter pound of orange-pekoe tea—and a bouquet of flowers. They had just enough for that—it was their last money.

The big day came. Evelyn Wells bought a new afternoon dress for the occasion. She was sure, she said rightfully, she looked very nice.

But when the young woman came into the ward room, she knew at once something had gone wrong. The men in their dark gray denims couldn't look her directly in the eye. There was an air of tragedy, but they gathered around and escorted her with elaborate activity to the head of the table.

In the center of the table were two sickly sprigs of honeysuckle, plucked through the window from the wall outside. On the plates were thick, heavy prison bread; no cake. Beside the plate were a few skinny leaves of lettuce, which Miss Wells knew had been grown outside in a box. There was a small ball of some ugly meat that appeared to be rubber chicken. This no man ate. The "tea" was so bitter that she almost lost the lining of her mouth.

They made the usual futile remarks of such an occasion and the girl thanked them quietly, kept back her tears and left. Outside, she had a cry for herself in the warden's office where she was known as one who could take it with the best. There she also heard the story.

Seventeen men who were soon to die had given their few bits of change to a minor prison official. He went to Florence. There he saw a saloon; there he gave way to his great weakness. He spent the collection on booze.

The chicken salad had been made with the men's beloved pet—a valiant but aged fighting cock.

Older gave much of his energy to others who did not value his faith in them. Jack Black, the master burglar, who later wrote the candid books, *You Can't Win!* came nearest to bolstering Older's own waning faith during his last years. Jack had been a desperate criminal, a many-time loser, a whiskey soak, an opium smoker for thirty years. His true name was only revealed to three persons, and Evelyn Wells said that if it were known the prominence of it would surprise many in this country.

Older saw Black one day in prison, was taken by his intelligence, and made a deal with a judge to give him a short jolt instead of life as a habitual criminal. The court made Older his custodian. Black, when he heard of the decision, said:

"Thank you, Judge. I can do that jolt standing on my head."

Then he spoke for an hour on the sociological and philosophical problems of the criminal. He ended with: "I have promised myself, and now I promise the court, that when I finish this sentence I shall look for the best instead of the worst, that I shall look for kindness instead of cruelty, and that I shall look for the good instead of the bad, and when I find them I shall return them with interest."

Black kept that promise. He worked with Older many years, and then took a job with Warden Lawes rehabilitating criminals at Sing Sing. He would not permit anyone to say he was "reformed." He continued to hate the police. Most of his salary (Older made him, first, payroll clerk) went to friends "on the lam." These sneaked in and out of the *Call* office and stood around until the high sign was passed to them by Jack. Then they murmured in a corner of the library and the stranger went away with a few dollars. Black maintained the code. During a newsboy "war," he was shot through the stomach by a half-witted lad while he was checking in returns' money. He was taken to the emergency hospital and told he was to die. Shortly afterward, his assailant was brought in by police. They wanted identification. Black asked to see the chief surgeon. He asked for an honest answer. Was he to die?

"I regret to tell you," said the surgeon, "that you have less than five hours to live."

Then Jack turned to the police and said:

"Take that dirty son of a bitch out of here. I never saw him in my life and he annoys me. I'm a sick man!"

Later, when peritonitis failed to develop and he recovered, he told this writer: "The doc said I was through. Why should I get a guy hanged so he'd be around bothering me again in hell?"

Years later, when Jack's book (written in longhand) had become nationally known, he had a small room in New York City. One day he left it to go to his publishers to pick up a royalty check. He never arrived and was never seen again.

Black left no notes; he did not even write Older, and perhaps in that another dream of the editor was not fulfilled.

"I can't understand why Jack did not write," said Older. "He would know I would understand why he must go."

(Jack's tuberculosis had returned. Before he left for New York he said to the author of this book and to Marshall Maslin, editorial writer, "I'll never be a burden to anyone. I did not ask to come here, therefore, my life is mine. I will take it as easily as I will flip away a cigarette butt.")

Besides the ex-convicts who flocked to his ranch, Fremont Older had, in later life, a large number of warm friends among the girls of the underworld. They looked upon him as the man who had at least made the best try to give them a break. For in 1917, while still on the *Bulletin*, he published the story of a prostitute, "A Voice from the Underworld, by Alice Smith." She told her story "from the crib to the crib," and brought the *Bulletin* 30,000 additional circulation in one month!

The young and liberal Reverend Paul Smith, pastor of the Central Methodist Episcopal church, joined in the excitement of the affair. He opened a crusade to close "the line," and before he realized what he had started, the supervisors voted to close the red-light district entirely. (The State Red Light Abatement Act had been passed—and ignored—in 1913.) The girls blamed their unemployment on the Reverend Smith, not Older.

The editor saw dramatic news in the event, if the minister and the girls could get together. Through "Alice Smith," he got 200 prostitutes to gather on the steps of the church. The brave Reverend

Smith was there to meet them. Reporters and cameramen from Older's newspaper also somehow knew about it.

Newsmen ushered the girls into the church and into the pews where they sat in their finery to listen and argue. Said the *Bulletin* in some of that florid writing Older often permitted as long as it had "a kick" in it:

"The Rev. Paul Smith today stood in his own church before the strangest audience ever assembled in San Francisco—or perhaps in the world—an audience of over 200 women of the night life, clad in bedraggled finery and bearing upon their faces the marks of ill health—showing plainly despite the traces of rouge—and exclaimed in a voice of sorrow:

"I don't know that I have ever been sadder in my life than I am right now. You have asked me some questions that have been asked ever since the world began and are still unanswered. I cannot answer them. I do not know what is to be done."

Then the minister went on to say that he was not trying to persecute any of the women, "victims of a system." He was attacking the exploiters of women.

Mrs. R. M. Gamble, who calmly announced herself as a madam, arose and asked to speak. She walked with dignity to the pulpit and said:

"We women find it impossible to exist on \$6 or \$7 a week that are paid to women in San Francisco. (Loud applause.) Most of the girls here come from the poor. These girls are better off in a house of prostitution because at least they get what little protection can be afforded them by the house. Nearly every one of these women is a mother or has someone depending on her. They were driven into this life by economic conditions.

"You can not trust in God when shoes are ten dollars and wages are six dollars a week." (Prolonged applause.)

How Older must have chortled at that remark, which a few wise-acres thought sounded somewhat like material for a headline.

There followed a give-and-take debate between the minister and the madam. Said the minister:

"Every woman has the right to expect a fair living wage. By this

I do not mean that a woman should desire to receive \$25 a week in order to support herself in luxury."

Said Madam Gamble:

"We might be even willing to agree to \$20. Would some of your congregation like to hire us?"

The Reverend Smith said he did not know.

So the girls sat and listened and stamped their feet and otherwise applauded when Mrs. Gamble made a good point. Then they filed out. A reporter wrote that some of them said when leaving that the Reverend Smith had started something he could not finish. Which proved to be quite correct. The girls had to quit the houses and hit the pavement.

Some of Older's best men worked on this story, but by this time the majority of the great ones who had covered the graft trials with him had slipped away to the bigger and better-paid field of New York. There were so many of them there that at one time they occasionally gathered for dinners. Then, it was Older they discussed—a friend, well remembered. He said he had had the best staff ever assembled. Among them, of course, the incomparable W. O. (Billy) McGeehan, and a few others: John Francis Neylan, Eustace Cullinan, Miriam Michelson, Edgar T. Gleeson, Lowell Otus Reese, Sinclair Lewis, Sophie Treadwell, Robert L. Duffus, Maxwell Anderson, Rose Wilder Lane, Bessie Beatty, Kathleen Norris, Evelyn Wells, Bayard Veiller, Ernest J. Hopkins, Lemuel F. Parton, Franck Havener, John D. Barry, Bruce Bliven, Robert Ripley, Rube Goldberg, Pauline Jacobson, Tad Dorgan, Herb Roth, Marshall Maslin, Eleanor Meherin, Ernestine Black, Marie Hicks Davidson, Eugene B. Block.

Billy McGeehan, later a managing editor and sports editor in New York, remained a favorite graduate of the Older School of Journalism, although pupil and teacher parted company with mutual anger during the graft trials. McGeehan was one of the best known of San Francisco's reporters; for many years he had the city police beat, then as lunatic a scene as that of Chicago's *Front Page*.

In 1908, a San Francisco newspaper, lacking intellectual guidance, decided as a circulation stunt to allow a group of society women to run the editorial department for a day.

Two of the women "reporters" were assigned the police run, and when word of this insensate barbarism came to the dirty, battered old Hall of Justice press room, there were agonized howls. Since it was still the day when the sensibilities of women were considered, this gross act by a newspaper meant that the walls must be cleaned of certain original verse. Brilliant jingles must go. One was particularly gaudy but choice. McGeehan announced he would write another verse and paste it temporarily over the offender.

So McGeehan leaned against the wall and wrote—in less than ten minutes—a poem that has since become the best known of all of San Francisco's newspaper verse: "Nothing Doing on Police." It has been parodied a hundred times and misquoted many more, but it still remains the best known of them all:

*Major Ford is on the wagon,  
Johnny Kenny's on a souse,  
Mistah Johnson's holding converse  
With a blue and yellow mouse.  
And the Yees and Yicks are puffing  
At the pensive pipe of peace,  
And McDonough's got religion—  
Nothing doing on police.*

*And the morgue is out of business,  
One lone floater on the slab,  
And the outside stations haven't  
Any stories we can grab;  
Down at Faust's Hall all reporters  
Pool their cash and get a lease  
On the season's bock beer output—  
Nothing doing on police.*

The stories about McGeehan are legend in San Francisco. Here he spent his youth and here he married Sophie Treadwell, another of Older's many brilliant young women reporters. (Once, for a short time, Older made Virginia Brastow city editor. "They work harder

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and don't drink like men," he said. "They really are the best possible business investment." But he also liked them to be pretty.)

Older could tell folklore about McGeehan and the late Jackson Gregory, the latter a nationally known and most prolific Western writer. Gregory quit the newspaper business and went wandering off seeking fiction material. He was, at the time, very far from successful.

Once he found himself utterly broke in Cuba and unable to get home. He was refused permission to send collect a cable asking for money. The cable company had had ill luck with beachcombers seeking funds from former friends. But Gregory knew that if he could get word to McGeehan, somehow the boys in the press room would get him home. Then he had it. He wired McGeehan, press collect:

"Holocaust imminent. Gregory."

When McGeehan got that he knew what the imminence was. The boys collected enough dollars to get Gregory back to the States. From that day on, the fiction man was known in San Francisco newspaper circles as "Holocaust Imminent Gregory."

McGeehan was a product of San Francisco's Hayes Valley district, along with Rube Goldberg, T. A. (Tad) Dorgan, Jim Corbett, and grew up with the toughs. While his heart was soft, he could also laugh easily at heroes. Older had used the word "mutt" for the gullible public and McGeehan called the people the "muttherd." There was a smart young cartoonist on the *San Francisco Examiner* at the time trying to draw a comic strip. He had a short character and a tall character who played the ponies at the old Emeryville race track. Bud Fisher named the tall one A. Mutt (from "muttherd") and the little fellow Jeff (from a local newsboy who wore sideburns).

Older would, if the day were dark and rainy, talk sometimes of George Sterling, the poet who wrote "The Cool, Grey City of Love," and "The Wine of Wizardry." Sterling was San Francisco's best-known eccentric writer and while Older was often inclined to think lightly of impractical geniuses, he liked the drama of the man's life. The editor liked to think that Sterling, his wife Caroline

Rand, and the poet Nora May French, were in a suicide pact. All died by poison, Nora French while in Sterling's cottage in Carmel. But Older's idea about the pact was mostly the fond thought of an editor who loved exciting headline stories.

Sterling killed himself in the Bohemian Club in November of 1926. He had been an intimate of Ambrose Bierce and Joaquin Miller and Jack London, and H. L. Mencken was one of his particular friends. A strange contradictory person was the poet Sterling. He would labor over a sonnet for months and give it away. His poems were lyrical yet he detested music. He was a dilettante and also a vicious boxer, out for blood. He went into studied rages if one mentioned rhubarb pie, water, women who left powder on your lapels, or electric street cars. Much of it was an amusing pose.

A few weeks before Mencken was to visit him, Sterling discovered there was a pain in his insides that great draughts of alcohol would not quiet. But he had planned a great treat for Mencken, a special bottle he had saved from the days before Prohibition. He nursed it lovingly—and then the night before the New York editor came to town, he sat down and drank it alone. He then took poison, the remainder of the drug his wife had used, which he had kept for years. He left a scribble. It said:

“Pain—careless pain.”

It is a newspaper folklore that Older fired “Red” Lewis for lack of writing ability. Older said this was a lie.

“Lewis was always wandering somewhere,” he said. “I hardly remember the guy. He didn't amount to anything then. He was only a kid. If I had fired him I'd be proud to say so now. I'd like the reputation of having fired a few good ones. . . . It gives one that ‘human touch’ that biographers like so well.”

Yet when he was kidded about firing Sinclair Lewis from the old *Bulletin* “because he could not write,” Older either admitted or denied the report as the mood of the moment fitted his pleasure. The truth was that he did not remember that Lewis had ever been a reporter for him.

“However,” he said, “my alleged—and there is no other adjective

—canning of this fellow at least gave to the newspaper business one of its best folklores."

"Red" Lewis—according to this tale—when he got fired by Older was nearly broke. He met another reporter who told him there was an opening on the *Seattle Times*, published by the serious-minded Colonel Blethen. How to get to the job was a problem, for it is a long and tiresome walk from San Francisco, California, to Seattle, Washington. Lewis decided to be bold. He went over to the Oakland Mole and boarded the Seattle train, and when the conductor showed up, told him he had lost his wallet and ticket.

"I'm on my way to Seattle," said Lewis, "to take a job on the *Times* there. If you will let me ride through I'll make a promise to see you on my first pay day and give you the money."

The conductor was kindly, and after thinking a moment said: "I guess we can fix that up, son. Colonel Blethen, owner of the paper, happens to be up front now. I just took his pass. If he can identify you, it's all right with me."

Lewis had no choice but to march through the cars with the conductor to the berth of Colonel Blethen.

"Colonel," said the conductor, "this young man says you have hired him and if I let him ride he will pay the company on his first pay day. Will you guarantee that?"

The man looked up from his book, took off his pince-nez and polished it and put it back on. Then he took a long look at Lewis.

"It is all right," he said quietly. "Permit him to ride."

As they were getting off the train the next day in Seattle, Lewis sought out his benefactor and said:

"I want to say, Colonel Blethen, that you were very kind to me. You don't know me—and I really haven't got the job, and . . ."

The other interrupted him:

"Please don't be so loud! And stop calling me 'Colonel Blethen' up here! A few days ago I found his railroad pass in a wallet in the street, and am merely making the most of it."

Older, of course, as the late afternoon shadows lengthened, was comfortably looking backwards. He was living again with his old

Editor's Note: Mr. Lewis on being told the above tale remarked, "It's a good story but I heard it told on someone else."

friends, both alive and dead. He liked "to wind up men's affairs," as he was doing for himself. He had a clear memory and could give dates and places and times "right off the cuff." Without stirring his memory too much, he could tell you that Abia A. Selover, the man always on the sidelines of events, finally—in 1877—got into a direct fight of his own—with Jay Gould. Selover went to New York, was an intimate of Gould, Jim Keene, Russell Sage. One day, following a complicated stock double-cross by Gould, he thrashed him publicly on Wall Street, ending the beating by lifting him over his head and throwing him eight feet into an alley.

Tremenhere Johns, the critic whose ill-tempered pen started the potent de Young-Maguire feud, unable to bear the pain of his ulcers, took laudanum in 1875. The widow of James King of William, left penniless when her husband was murdered, was well taken care of by marriage to General A. M. Winn, who founded the Native Sons of the Golden West, although ineligible for membership himself. (He had been born outside California.)

Alf Cohen, villain of the case of the missing \$360,000 gold in the Adams' Bank failure, whose brother started the vogue of stoning the *Bulletin's* windows, died worth \$3,000,000, accumulated in construction of branch railroads. So it went: the little ones grew and the large ones shrunk as time went on and Fremont Older sat on the sunny side of the barn.

## CHAPTER XLII

# The Older Legend Ends

SITTING in the warm afterglow of his victories and his defeats, Older now and then held court. Day by day, he sat behind his worn desk in the front office on the second floor of the New Montgomery Street building, across the narrow alley from the Palace Hotel. Time was catching up slowly, and there was something disquieting about those sudden pains that darted through his chest and down his arms.

Old friends and young reporters, with problems, came to listen and go away feeling better. Each day he wrote a chapter of his memoirs. And, being Older, he had adventures as he sat there in his glass-walled corner room. One day, an insane writer attempted to rent a room in the Palace overlooking his office. Motive: murder by rifle.

Long ago, his doctor had forbidden smoking, but he kept a box of cigars in the upper right-hand drawer of his desk. As he talked, he

fondled a cigar, sometimes placed an unlighted one in his mouth, then put it down guiltily on the edge of his desk. As he illustrated some point in his yarn with arm gestures, the cigar got knocked to the floor. Soon another came out of the box. Thus, littered around his desk at the end of each afternoon were twenty White Owls, which the janitor always gathered and gave away or smoked.

In all the years that Older helped the owners of the *Bulletin* become wealthy, he never shared in the benefits. Until he went with Hearst late in 1917, he had no title better than managing editor—and a salary comfortably settled at that level. When he became editor of the *Call*, his salary was approximately \$20,000, but now he had no interest in money except as something to give away. For years, until reporters and receptionists ganged up to chase them out, professional bums plagued his office. After the bloc was established the pan-handlers waited for him on the pavements, knowing he was punctual about leaving for his train to Cupertino. There he passed out what he had, which now was not so much since he had argued his wife into putting him on an allowance.

When told by staff members that he "was a sucker for a bum," Older said, "I never pretended to be an idealist. I frankly confess to having all the sins of the human race. I wish I were an idealist, but my feet of clay forbid."

(The old "pirate" taxicab driver who took Older to his train each afternoon sometimes had to wait for his money because these loafers got it first, but he was a cheerful waiter. He was sunny about it even when Clarence Darrow came out and went riding in the hack with Older. The driver and Darrow had great arguments about life. They finally agreed on one premise: it is a weary world.)

Yet, once upon a time, Older went on a grand campaign to save money. He was very young, twenty-two years old. Vagariously, he had taken a section of redwoods to homestead, given it up in six months, sold it for \$100, come to San Francisco again, bought a nice overcoat and suit. Then he was broke. Suddenly, he was panicky.

He got a printing job at \$22 a week and made one of the few conservative decisions of his life. He was going to save regularly. He put \$8 of his first week's pay in the bank and got a little leather

deposit book. Next week he put in \$10, and decided it was so easy it would be smarter thereafter to put in \$12. He gave up his room and took a cheaper one, he never went to the theater, which he loved, he shaved once a week. He looked like a tramp. He was now putting \$16 a week in the bank. He was eating doughnuts and coffee for all three meals.

Then one day he turned and looked at the printer beside him. He, too, was a bum, hollow-cheeked, unkempt, unshaven, filthy.

Older said: "Having a tough go of it? Family up against it, sick wife or something?"

The man said: "No, I should say not. I ain't got no family or anything. I ain't broke. I got \$1,000 in the bank!"

Older threw down his tools, went to the bank and drew out the entire \$160 he had saved. He spent it in a few hours.

About this time, too, he went to the gold strike at Bodie on a stage and a beautiful Spanish girl was a passenger. He was captivated. After some talented maneuvering at a stop, Older sat across from the girl and worked forward until their knees touched.

"We had twelve solid hours of night before us," said Older, "and, of course, because of the cramped position, sleep was impossible. I soon found that silence was more effective than words. I began to associate this beautiful Spanish maiden with red roses, guitars, castanets, lyrical songs and passionate declarations of love. I tried to express what I felt by tenderly pressing her hand, and I thought she occasionally shyly responded. The night hours flew like minutes. At Bodie I tenderly helped her down and she ran into a nearby house.

"I asked, trembling, who she was.

"'That's Mazie, one of Mabel's girls,' the driver said. 'She's been to San Francisco on a toot with her man.'

"Well, my experience was not a total loss. I had conceived a beautiful dream that lasted twelve hours. It was a long time for a dream to last."

Some of his dreams lasted more than twelve hours, but there is not much evidence many were fulfilled. Even his greatest battle, release of Mooney, was still a dream when he died. So was his hope that capital punishment would be abolished. He had started this latter

campaign in 1907, when he planted a young man in the execution room at San Quentin prison and had him call out as the trap was sprung:

"I protest in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ! *Thou shalt not kill!*"

It made a noticeable story. Then Older ordered all executions covered in detail, with all the horror emphasized.

"Let the public get their bellies full of it. They're responsible for it. Let them have the bloody details. Maybe some day they'll get enough."

Older could be severe when he had to be. He hated sham. Once a pompous woman came demanding space for some private charity. She had once been not what she now appeared, but since marriage to a wealthy man, she found herself in a position to be arrogant with the receptionist. Older had heard the woman talking sharply to the girl outside and so in the midst of her speech about her charity, he suddenly said:

"Say, Mame, do you still remember the days when you used to work in the nickel dance halls?"

He said this with a most charming smile.

When chided later about this, he said he was ashamed, but added, "Well, every capitalist should remember he is only about three days from the breadline. Ninety percent of the human race is only three days from the breadline, anyway. But then, take the money from the rich and give it to the poor, and the poor would be as unbearable as the rich are now."

And one day he said to a minister, "Why don't you preach Christianity?"

The minister snapped that he did.

"If you did," said Older, "we would have reporters and cameramen out covering your church, because the congregation would be outside stoning it."

He had no leaning toward any type of set religion, but he had been to retreat with the Catholics, and occasionally took home a Protestant preacher who had fallen from grace and taken up drink. For three years he kept bringing home one of these with delirium tremens, and he didn't give up on him until he had him back in the

pulpit. When this man preached in the largest church in the city, Older went to hear him. He went to hear the fellow who had made good, not the sermon, he announced loudly and defensively.

"I can write sermons, if I need them," he roared.

As night began to close in about Fremont Older, he seemed at first to become younger in body. It was true that there was the worry about angina pectoris, but he snorted if anyone suggested he was not obeying the doctor. He became a vegetarian and took to drinking great draughts of sauerkraut juice. He had, however, begun to go to bed with his beloved Dickens under his arm soon after six o'clock every evening. He was up at 6 A.M. On his seventy-sixth birthday, he merrily announced he had driven his automobile at seventy-six miles an hour.

The only sadness he openly displayed was that, the depression being on, he could no longer obtain jobs for men who slipped quietly into his office.

"I could stand it better," he said, "if they were a little more angry at what other stupid humans have done to them. They are timid, and that is defeat that can never again be turned into victory."

Looking about his own home in the hills, he added, "Well, the depression has not affected the beauty of the roses."

He had long ago relaxed in his prosecution of an idea. He said at seventy-five:

"I used to think if we tried hard enough, we could reform the world by next Wednesday at exactly four o'clock. Now I know it will take many millions of Wednesdays to make things any better."

Just how much of his pessimism was merely pleasant "sounding of my voice," few knew. He said, "I no longer bubble with joy when a baby is born into this world, knowing life as I do." And, "the best place to find gratitude is in the dictionary."

During the annual Christmas party at his ranch home, he interrupted the merrymaking to say:

"Christ's birthday! What's it all about, anyway? Who remembers Christ? Who tries to live in his steps? Why, if anyone tried to live like Christ today, he'd be locked up in jail."

But he stayed and played with the others and enjoyed the gifts very much and was a happy man.

Now he was taking a lot of medicines, or at least the bottles were around his desk. He refused to attend funerals. There were lonely moods that came suddenly. He began to tell everyone how much he was suffering, and although he had broken every rule of health for seventy years, he now seemed surprised that age had turned out to be such a tyrant.

"If the old noodle will only last!" he said.

He and Darrow began writing long letters to each other about life and its aftermath. Neither seemed to see any aftermath, at all.

Wrote Older: "I haven't any doubt whatever that death is complete annihilation, that in my case it is merely closing the gap between the 30th of August, 1856 [his birth], and the time of my death.

"In other words, it is the resumption of unconsciousness, which was interrupted when I was born.

"I am feeling quite well these days, and I get quite a good deal of old dog comfort out of sitting around in the sun and looking at the hills."

Darrow replied:

"Of course, my dear Older, I feel as hopeless as you do about things; but of course we had no right to expect that a man was anything but a man, or could ever be anything else. His status, capacities, feelings are as fixed as the monkey's. He had never been different, never will be, and never can be.

"But I presume you and I will go on dreaming to the end."

Older quoted this when he closed his newspaper serial, "*My Own Story*," and added:

"From being a savage fighter against wrong and injustice as I saw them in the old days, I have gone clear over to the point where I do not blame anyone for anything. I believe at all times man does the best he is capable of at the moment. It may be a very bad best, but it is *his* best. If I continue to progress along these lines, and live long enough, I may yet be able to pass what I consider the supreme test—*tolerance for the intolerant*."

To Communists who complained about police rough treatment given a woman agitator, he wrote:

"If I were to enlist in a world-wide bloody revolution, I should ex-

pect to get even worse than a prison sentence. Everyone seems to have the rabies today. I shall try to keep from getting deeply stirred emotionally over any cause again. So far as I know, no one has yet been born who is capable of using power intelligently."

Writing about the depression: "There isn't anything the matter with the world. It's the people in it."

And, later, a sense of the spiritual returned: "I cannot doubt that some great power is behind all this. This universe couldn't have just happened."

This brought his friends back to re-reading what he had announced as his true creed in completing his earlier serial, *Growing Up*.

"My experiences of the last twenty-five years have confirmed my belief that hatred and violence never permanently solved any problem. Hate poisons the blood and unbalances the mind. It hurts both the one who uses it and the one it is used against. It never has worked and it never can work. It is a force that wastes itself in wanton futility. Growth and understanding, on the other hand, nearly always come from kindness and tolerance.

"Gentle words have a far greater force than bullets and bayonets and machine guns, greater than steel-barred prisons and the murderous gallows. This is no new philosophy. It was expressed by Christ nearly two thousand years ago. The doctrine set forth in His imperishable message is extremely hard for us to follow. But, possibly, as time passes, its influence upon our behavior will increase, and Christianity will be recognized as the only influence that can bring about a real civilization. I have long been convinced that if the human race is ever saved, it will be by loving kindness and tolerance and not by force and violence. Love may yet fill the vast emptiness in life and satisfy that great longing and wistfulness in all mankind."

On Sunday, March 3, 1935, Mrs. Older and Mary d'Antonio, who resided at the ranch, drove to the annual Camellia Show in Sacramento. Older did the driving, although by now there was a chauffeur. He had a book by Montaigne with him and when they arrived at the pavilion, Older decided to stay in the automobile and read his book. He began, however, writing on slips of old yellow

paper one of his articles that had now become so prominent on the editorial page of the *Call*.

He entitled it, "Montaigne Modernized." Then he scrawled in his large hand in pencil:

"I have been unable to find a gloomy note in Lowenthal's auto-biography of Montaigne, one of the world's greatest philosophers.

"He refused to be depressed by death, which is the inevitable end of us all.

"When he passed fifty he made up his mind that he could run no longer.

"He thought it was enough that he crawled.

"No complaint of the natural decay which slowed up his pace, nor regret that his life was not as sound nor as long as an oak. . . ."

At this moment of writing, his wife and Miss d'Antonio came out.

"If you had waited fifteen minutes longer," he said, "I would have finished my article."

He took three camellias from the bunches they were carrying. Three were of white-red. His favorite colors, Evelyn Wells said. He took these flowers and placed them in his wife's hand. He reminded her of something she may have been thinking about—the first flowers he had ever given to Mrs. Older, then not yet his wife, had been camellias—and in this city of Sacramento. He smiled and joked as he drove the car away. He was wearing a new green suit.

As he drove along, his eyes occasionally looked toward the lovely green of the Mother Lode hills beyond and he continued to joke with the others in the car. In the midst of a word, he sighed and his hands dropped from the wheel. The chauffeur, sitting beside him, switched off the ignition and brought the car to the side of the road.

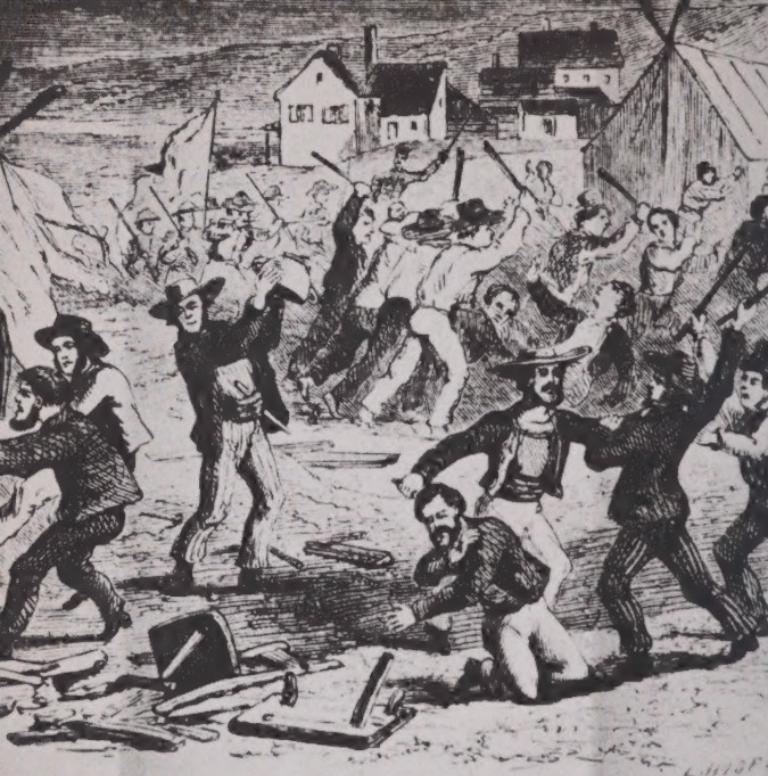
Fremont Older was dead.

He lies today under the oaks on the ranch, and there is a granite headstone placed there by his staff. There are only two words on it. They are authentic: "Our Editor."

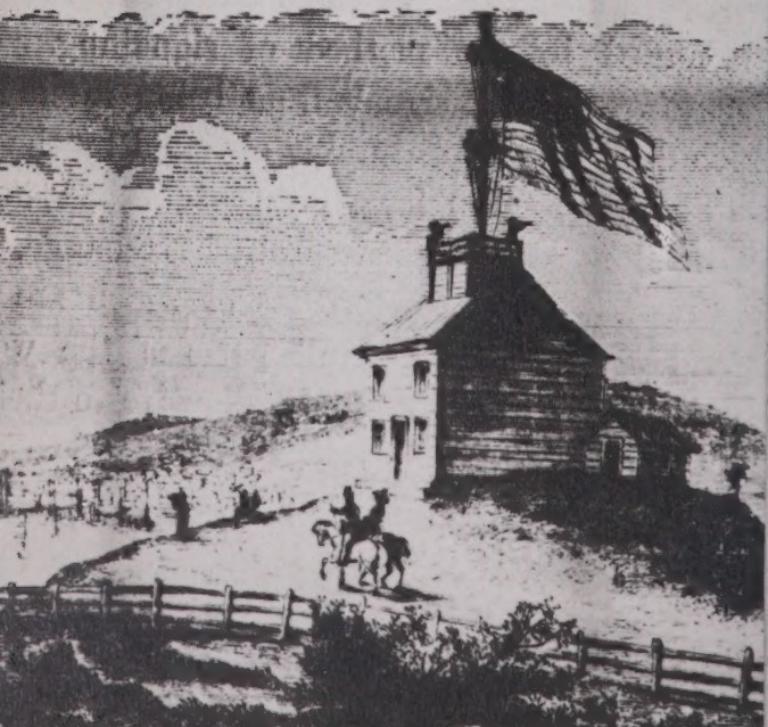


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## NO HOPE L FOR SAFE ANY BUIL

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out into the residential section, in and

SAN FRANCISCO, THURSDAY, APRIL 19, 1906.

# QUAKE AND FIRE SAN FRANCISCO IN RUIN

THE FATE OF SAN FRANCISCO. SHAKEN BY A TEMBLOR AT 5:15 O'CLOCK YESTERDAY MORNING, THE SHOCK LASTING SEVERAL MINUTES IN ALL DIRECTIONS, THE CITY IS A MASS OF SMOKING RUINS. AT SIX O'CLOCK LAST EVENING THE FLAMES BEGAN TO DESTROY SUCH PORTIONS AS THEIR FURY HAD SPARED DURING THE EARLIER PORTION OF THE DAY. BUILDINGS BURNED IN THE EARLY MORNING, THEY JOCKEYED AS THE DAY WANED, LEFT THE BUSINESS SECTION, WHICH THEY HAD NOTICED, ON TO THE RESIDENCE PORTIONS. AS NIGHT FELL THEY MADE THEIR WAY OVER INTO THE NORTH BEACH SECTION, SPREADING OUT ALONG THE SHIPPING SECTION DOWN THE BAY SHORE, OVER THE HILLS AND ACROSS TOWARD THE SHIP AND TOWER AND MANUFACTURING CONCERN'S FELL IN THEIR PATH. THIS COMPLETED THE DESTRUCTION OF THE ENTIRE DISTRICT IN WHICH THEY ARE REACHING TO THE SOUTH ACROSS THE CHANNEL CANNOT BE TOLD AS THIS PART OF THE CITY IS SHUT OFF.

HOMLESS WERE MAKING THEIR WAY WITH THEIR BLANKETS AND SCANT PROVISIONS TO GOLDEN GATE PARK AND THE BAY HILLS JUST NORTH OF THE HAYES VALLEY. WRECKED SECTION PILED THEIR BELONGINGS IN THE STREETS AND EXPRESSED THINGS AWAY TO THE SPARSELY SETTLED REGIONS. EVERYBODY IN SAN FRANCISCO IS PREPARED TO LEAVE THE CITY, FOR IT IS TOTALLY DESTROYED.

BUSINESS HOUSE STANDS, THEATRES ARE CRUMPLED INTO HEAPS. FACTORIES AND COMMISION HOUSES LIE IN SHOULDERING PLANTS HAVE BEEN RENDERED USELESS. THE "CALL" AND THE "EXAMINER" BUILDINGS, EXCLUDING THE "CALL", ARE DESTROYED.

FRANCISCO WILL REACH FROM \$50,000,000 TO \$200,000,000. THESE FIGURES ARE IN THE ROUGH AND NOTHING CAN BE TOLD

SUFFERING YESTERDAY. HUNDREDS WERE INJURED, EITHER BURNED, CRUSHED OR STRUCK BY FALLING PIECES FROM THE OPERATING TABLE AT MECHANICS' PAVILION, IMPROVISED AS A HOSPITAL FOR THE COMFORT AND CARE OF 400 OF THE INJURED. ESTIMATED THAT AT LEAST 500 MET THEIR DEATH IN THE HORROR.

AGE FROM PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT, THE CITY WAS PLACED UNDER MARTIAL LAW. HUNDREDS OF TROOPS MARCHED THE STREETS MORE WERE SET AT WORK ABSTAINING THE FIRE AND POLICE DEPARTMENTS. THE STRICTEST ORDERS WERE ISSUED.

DURING THE AFTERNOON THREE THIEVES MET THEIR DEATH BY RIFLE BULLETS WHILE AT WORK IN THE RUINS. THE GUARDS THAT THE CAVALRYMEN ROSE AND ALL THE CROWDS WERE FORCED FROM THE LEVEL DISTRICT TO THE HILLY HILLS.

OFF, AND MAY BE IT WAS JUST AS WELL, FOR THE LINES OF FIRE DEPARTMENT WOULD HAVE BEEN ABSOLUTELY USELESS AGAINST THE WORK OF HIS MEN AND EARLY IN THE MORNING IT WAS SEEN THAT THE ONLY POSSIBLE CHANCE TO SAVE THE CITY WAS DYNAMITE. DURING THE DAY A BLAST COULD BE HEARD IN ANY SECTION AT INTERVALS OF ONLY A FEW MINUTES, AND ATOMES. BUT THROUGH THE GAPS MADE THE FLAMES JUMPED AND ALTHOUGH THE FAILURES OF THE HEROIC EFFORTS OF THE DICKENING, THE WORK WAS CONTINUED WITH A DESPAIR THAT WILL LIVE AS ONE OF THE FEATURES OF THE THIRTEEN YEARS.

LAUGHING, ROARING, ONRUSHING FIRE DEMON.

**BLOW BUILDINGS UP TO CHECK FLAMES**

The dynamiting of buildings in the track of the fire, to stay the progress of the flames, was in charge of John Birmingham, Jr., superintendent of the California Powder Works. Several experienced men from the powder works, assisted by policemen

**WHOLE CITY IS ABLAZE**

At 10 o'clock last night the Hotel dental Hotel was destroyed by the flames which swept unchecked across Montgomery street and attacked the block bounded by Montgomery, Bush and Kearny. The new Merchant's Exchange building was a mass of ruins from basement to tower.

The Union Trust building and Crocker-Wells Fargo Bank were both ablaze and the Chronicle building and other buildings in that block were threatened by the flames.

Shortly after 10 o'clock the fire had eaten its way northward from Market Street to Kearny and California

**CHURCH OF SAINT IGNATIUS IS DESTROYED**

The magnificent church and school building of St. Ignatius, on the northwest corner of Van Ness avenue and Hayes street represents in its destruction a material loss of over \$1,000,000. The actual cost of the great building was over \$200,000, but during the

**MAYOR CONFRONTED WITH MILITARY AND OTHERS**

At 1 o'clock yesterday afternoon 20 representatives San Francisco met the Mayor, Gen. Charles C. Forbes, and State Military authorities in the police office in the Hall of Justice. They had been summoned there by Schmitz early in the forenoon, the flood panic situation having forced themselves upon him because of the shock of earthquake in the morning, and the men who reached him of the completeness of the disaster. In time in making out a list of citizens from whom to get aid and assistance, and in summoning them to the meeting.

